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\$5

This Week's Line Up

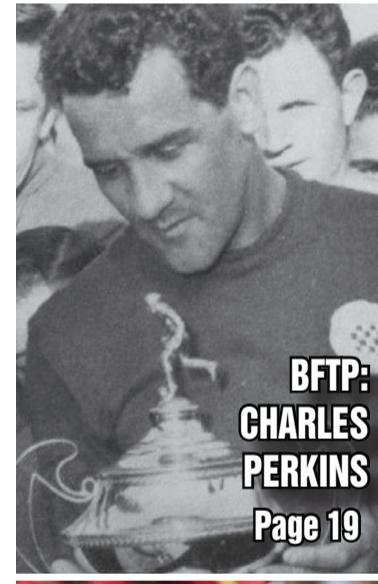
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A-League Round 12 Friday 23rd Dec - Monday 26th Dec 2011



O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL FOR...



Elastoplast

Sport

Supporting your Passion



Vale John Bedford (1942 - 18 Dec 2011)

By Roy Hay

John Bedford was part of the South Melbourne Hellas team which won the first State League championship under the auspices of the Victorian Soccer Federation in 1962.

John died this week at the age of 70 in Wodonga. He was born and brought up in Box Hill and Bill Stewart persuaded him to start playing soccer at the age of seven. After heavy defeats in the early years, the Box Hill juniors won their leagues from under-9 to under-11 and by the age of 15 John Bedford was making his debut for the Box Hill seniors. He won the club's best and fairest award twice in four years. Unfortunately the glory days of Box Hill were behind them and in 1961 the team was relegated from the State League.

In the match against Hellas that year, however, the young Bedford played and scored, and coach Manny Poulakakis moved quickly to sign him. Box Hill did not want to let him go, but eventually the transfer went through. His first game for Hellas was against Sydney powerhouse Pan Hellenic and he scored twice in a 3-1 win. But as John tells it, the details of his move to Hellas had not been settled when he went along to watch an Ampol Cup night game between Hellas and Polonia. Someone grabbed him from behind and told him he was playing. So he took the field and scored. Not a bad start to a career at Hellas which lasted until 1974. He was ever present as Hellas won the State League title in 1962.

Some weeks into the 1964 season, Hellas signed some new players and John was told that he would be on the bench. 'No, I won't', he replied and went off to play footy with his mates at Box Hill Pioneers, winning a premiership in the process. Next year new coach John Margaritis came back for Bedford and he resumed his soccer



John Bedford (right) of South Melbourne Hellas and Eddie Sacco of George Cross at Olympic Park in 1962. Photo: Uwe Kuessner.

career. A tendon injury and a bout of hepatitis kept him out of a number of games in 1963, but he contributed to the 1964-66 seasons when Hellas completed three in a row. His form with Hellas saw him selected for Victoria 28 times and he was on the fringes of Australian selection but unfortunately never received his full international cap, though he had a couple of games for the Australia B team. The only two games he remembers missing for Victoria were against AS Roma in 1966 and Manchester United in 1975. In his 18-year career he played 553 games and took part in 6 champion-

ship victories. Hellas also won the State League in 1972 and 1974 when John had reached the veteran stage. In the 1960s he represented Australia in the Laidlaw World Cup for local 'national' teams. He had a very strong left foot and began as goalscoring winger, though often moving back to a midfield role as his experience grew. A signwriter to trade he retired in 2007 but still kept his eye in, helping out with the firm when necessary. He was as enthusiastic about the game and his part in it as he was when he was playing. He played for some of the great coaches, including Manny Poulakakis, John Margaritis, Bill Cur-

ran and Les Scheinflug. 'The teams in New South Wales thought they were the best. We went up to play against Prague in the Australian Cup one year and were told we would be hammered, but we beat them 5-1. The only team which beat us was Hakoah,' he said. A Soccer Weekly writer said John Bedford was 'a fast, brainy and determined player, who is never beaten till the final whistle'. John Bedford is survived by his wife, Margaret, his two sons, Darren and Andrew and four sisters, Anita, Sue, Catherine and Julie. His funeral took place in Wodonga on Thursday, 22 December.

SOCEROOS WARM UP IN COPENHAGEN FOR WORLD CUP ASIAN QUALIFIERS

The Qantas Socceroos will play an international friendly match against Denmark in Copenhagen on 2 June 2012.

Football Federation Australia (FFA) confirmed the fixture would be the final warm up match before the 4th round of 2014 FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers.

Qantas Socceroos Head Coach Holger Osieck said he was delighted to be able to play against such quality opposition as Denmark prior to the final phase of the qualification campaign.

"Denmark is a highly regarded football team with a well respected coach in Morten Olsen," said Osieck.

"The Danes will be a week away from their opening match for Euro 2012 when we meet in June so we expect to face a full strength and motivated opponent."

Denmark, currently 11th in the FIFA Men's Rankings, has been drawn in Euro 2012 Group B with the Netherlands, Germany and Portugal.

The final group match will be played against Saudi Arabia at AAMI Park in Melbourne on Wednesday 29 February (7.30pm kick off). Tickets are on sale from www.ticketek.com.au or 132 849.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) will make the draw for the 4th round in late March with qualification matches to be confirmed for mid-June. The Qantas Socceroos have played Denmark on two previous occasions with the Qantas Socceroos most recently defeating Denmark 1-0 at Ruimsig Stadium prior to the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

The match will be played at the Parken Stadium, Copenhagen and will be broadcast Live and Exclusive by FOX SPORTS in Australia.

Ticketing details will be released at a later date.

Match Details

Denmark v Qantas Socceroos
Saturday 2 June 2012
Parken Stadium, Copenhagen,
Denmark
Kick-Off time:TBC



The likes of Harry Kewell and Luke Wilkshire will face Denmark in June as part of the quest in the Road to Rio.

Heart sign youngsters to new deals

By Daniel Quinn

Melbourne Heart have signed youngsters Eli Babalj, Aziz Behich, Brendan Hamill and Jason Hoffman to new deals.

Young players are just one thing which the club focuses on and Melbourne Heart coach John van't Schip explains part of the club's philosophy. "Developing the next generation of professional players is an important part of the Club's philosophy. Helping young players is a contribution that goes beyond just our club but helps Australian football overall."

Van't Schip considers the club as a stepping stone to the Socceroos. "Our goal is to offer a pathway for future Socceroos. In Eli, Aziz, Brendan and Jason, we believe we have four very talented young players capable of one day doing just that, representing Australia at senior international level if they keep working hard."

Babalj, Behich and Hamill have been impressing on pitch and have started the majority of this season, whereas Hoffman has impressed off the bench. Behich and Hamill have signed a two-year extension to their current deal which takes them through to the end of the 2013-14 A-League season. Babalj and Hoffman have signed a one-year extension which takes them through to the end of the 2012-13 A-League season. Van't Schip believes these youngsters have potential. "In Eli, Aziz, Brendan and Jason, we believe we have four very talented young players capable of one day doing just that, representing Australia at senior international level if they keep working hard."

Behich has started in all but two games because of Olyroos duties and has been vital at left back for Heart where-



Eli Babalj signs on the dotted line and commits to Heart until the end of the 2013 season. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

at centre back with the experienced Adrian Madaschi.

Hamill knows there is still a lot of work to be done to achieve his goals. "I'm just trying to improve as a player, to become better, to become a regular. I'm nowhere near where I want to be and the hard work is to come."

Babalj a tall centre forward has been

in great form which includes his goal against champions Brisbane Roar.

Babalj understands that he needs to prove himself in Melbourne before moving overseas. "Every kid's dream is to play in Europe one day but at the moment my focus is on Melbourne Heart... that's why I re-signed, to prove myself here."

The Saga of Tony Sage's Perth Glory

By Jacob Kagi

Tony Sage's claim this week that he would quit as owner of Perth Glory, followed by a change of heart less than two days later, highlighted the wealth of problems facing the WA A-League club. Sage, in an interview with The West Australian newspaper which went to print on Monday, said he'd had enough following abuse he copped from fans at the end of Perth's 2-1 loss to Melbourne Heart on Saturday.

"It's very obvious A-League football in Perth is not warranted," he said.

"I'm disappointed, upset, angry. I've never been abused that much since day one. It sort of makes up your mind. This will be my last season in charge of Perth Glory. I just can't sit there and cop abuse and my family cop abuse."

"No one is really interested in coming to Perth Glory games and the fans don't want me to be in control. That was made very clear to me (on Saturday) by a lot of people." But barely more than 24 hours later, Sage had changed his mind. "I regret saying I had had enough and I am sticking with the club," he said.

"I will be there as long as the fans want me to be there. In the end it is all about them."

While the Glory hadn't officially commented on the issue as of Wednesday afternoon, Football Federation Australia released a brief statement saying Sage would be staying with the club.

Sage has threatened to walk away from the club before, several times,



Perth Glory owner Tony Sage

but has never followed through. His comments weren't in the heat of the moment though, as the interview with the newspaper occurred nearly 24 hours after the loss to the Heart.

The reasons for Sage's frustrations are both undeniable and obvious. He is expected to lose more than \$3million on the club this season, having occurred similar shortfalls every season since he took over in 2007.

He is the sole reason A-League football remains in Perth as it's increasingly unlikely the FFA, already under significant financial pressure, would be unwilling to fund the club long-term and the hopes of finding a new owner to pour money into the club are, at best, improbable.

Sage has given the club every chance to win, putting in big money to recruit the likes of Jacob Burns, Chris Coyne, Mile Sterjovski and Robbie Fowler in previous

seasons. None lived up to expectations.

Again he opened the chequebook again this season to bring in Shane Smeltz, Liam Miller, Travis Dodd and Danny Vukovic. Again the squad hasn't lived up to expectations, as they've won just one of their past eight games and sit in eighth spot.

The poor results this season and since the creation of the A-League, during which the Glory have made the finals just once, have had a huge impact on crowds.

At no point during since the glory days of the National Soccer League has Perth averaged more than 10,000 fans per game, while barely over 6000 attended their past two home games.

The fans are sick of mediocrity, both on and off the field, which is understandable considering how poor their results have been since the NSL ended.

But to take out their frustration on Sage is simply wrong. Sage was hit hard by the global financial crisis and the mining tax certainly won't help him either. He is putting a very significant portion of his wealth into the club and doesn't deserve any abuse.

The fans should show more respect to Sage, but the club needs to show more respect to the fans.

The era of mediocrity has dragged on for far too long. If the on-field results don't quickly improve, there's no hope of improving the club's off-field situation.

But whoever is right or wrong, Sage's threat has shown just how fragile the future of the Glory could be, which is incredibly alarming.

KOSMINA TAKES OVER AS REDS COACH

By Nic Kerber

Adelaide United FC has installed the club's inaugural coach John Kosmina as the Reds' new coach, effective immediately.

Initially, the term of Kosmina's appointment will be for the remainder of the Hyundai A-League 2011/12 Season and the club's 2012 AFC Champions League campaign.

Club Chairman Greg Griffin made the announcement that Kosmina will take over the reins from Rini Coolen as the club attempts to turnaround its poor start to the season, which sees it sitting ninth with only two wins after 11 games.

"We have gone to John (Kosmina) because he is a passionate South Australian with a great history, he has taken this club to being Premiers before, he is a man who believes in the club, he has passion, and essentially the reason this ownership group got involved with Adelaide United was so that there would be a strong football presence in South Australia," Griffin said.

"Clearly what happened on Friday night at Hindmarsh Stadium was not acceptable and basically we're here to make sure that we've got a strong and vibrant Adelaide United."

"We believe that bringing John in is the start of getting Adelaide United back to where it should be which is at the top of the table...we believe he is the man with his passion and love of South Australia to take us where this club has to be."

Just short of five years on from when Kosmina last coached the club, he said he was 'truly humbled' to be back and said he was determined to get the squad to recapture the 'fire in the



Back to the future: John Kosmina returns to the Adelaide United hot-seat and replaces Rini Coolen.

belly'.

"It's not often you get a second chance at things...and it's a challenge I couldn't knock back," Kosmina said.

"It's a challenge I'm looking forward to and I do love this club. I was here from day one and it was sad to be at the game on Friday night, and I'm not trying to hammer the dead, but I didn't like what I saw, not just from the team's point of view but I don't like to see the punters as upset as they were."

"We've got to re-embrace the supporters, we've got to get them back on side because they are, as first captain Ross Aloisi used to say, the twelfth man and

we need them on side."

"The team needs to be more competitive and they need to be a bit more passionate."

Kosmina was contracted to coach Croydon Kings, but the local club kindly agreed to release him so he can take charge of Adelaide United.

"We want to thank Croydon for accommodating our request to bring John to coach Adelaide United and really appreciate their assistance in helping to make this possible," Griffin said.

Despite being stood down as Head Coach, Coolen's contract has not been terminated and he will remain at the

club, the Dutchman to coach the Reds' Youth Team and also be responsible for guiding the club's junior development program to help identify and nurture young local talent.

"Rini is still an employee of the club, he has just been directed to assume complete control of the youth development program, the Youth Team and provide a blueprint for us going forward," Griffin said.

Kosmina coached Adelaide United from its inception until 2007 and since then has had stints in charge of Sydney FC and local club Adelaide Raiders, while he has also been involved in the national team setup.

FFA appoints Panel of Football Historians

Football Federation Australia (FFA) has announced the first appointments to its inaugural Panel of Football Historians.

The honorary appointees are:

- **Roy Hay**, a Deakin University academic, football writer and historian
- **Billy Murray**, a LaTrobe University academic, historian and author of numerous books on the history of world football
- **Ted Simmons**, an executive member of International Federation of Football History and Statistics

The formation of the panel was announced by the FFA's Deputy Chairman and Hall of Fame Committee Chairman Brian Schwartz at the 2011 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in Sydney last month.

The Panel of Football Historians will have the task of advising FFA on all historical matters, including significant anniversaries and pre-selection of Hall of Fame nominees.

The first task of the Panel of Football

Historians will be to provide historical background on Australia's admission as a full member of FIFA in 1963.

"Australian football will reach the 50th anniversary of full FIFA membership in 2013 and it's a significant milestone that should be celebrated," said FFA CEO Ben Buckley.

"The game has amazing stories to tell stretching back more than 130 years and it's time to do a better job in marking historic events and telling these stories to the new generation of football fans."

The appointments to the Panel of Football Historians come on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Commonwealth Football Association, regarded as the first national body of football in Australia.

On 21 December 1911, delegates representing every state concluded the Australasian Association Football Conference in Sydney by establishing the Commonwealth Football Association.

Melbourne Derby Sold Out

Melbourne Heart FC advises the Hyundai A-League's Melbourne Derby at AAMI Park tonight is a sell out.

All remaining tickets were snapped up by willing punters early Thursday morning, ensuring the full house signs will be raised for the first time at a Hyundai A-League match this season.

The Melbourne Derby looms as the most highly anticipated encounter of the season to date, with Heart flying high in third place after securing victories in five of the last six matches.

Chief Executive Officer Scott Munn believes the sell-out crowd is a definitive show of faith in the Melbourne Derby's status as one of the marquee events on the Victorian sporting calendar.

"The sell out is a fantastic result for the Hyundai A-League and ensures a capacity crowd will witness what will surely be remembered as one of the biggest football games in recent memory," he said.

"We have no doubt both sets of supporters will generate an electric atmosphere on the night, as cross-city rivals battle it out for the chance to edge ahead in the all-time head-to-head stakes."

"There are still limited memberships and corporate hospitality available, which will be the only way to secure a seat at AAMI Park

on Friday night."

Five-Game memberships, which guarantee access to the Melbourne Derby are \$100 for adults and \$60 for juniors, while corporate hospitality for the match is still available at \$190 per person.

For more information regarding Melbourne Derby corporate hospitality, supporters can call Melbourne Heart FC on 03 9457 1765, while memberships are available from melbourneheartfc.com.au or 1300 ALL HEART.

With parking limited, public transport will be the quickest and easiest way to travel to AAMI Park, with bus, tram and train stops within close distance.

SOLD OUT

Thwaite backs Tyson as Moss is ruled out

MICHAEL Thwaite has backed goalkeeper Jerrad Tyson to take his opportunity between the sticks after confirmation that Glen Moss will have surgery on a torn groin this Thursday and faces at least eight weeks on the sidelines.

Tyson came on in the 69th minute of the 3-0 win over Adelaide on Friday night and produced a string of fine saves to play his part in United's second consecutive clean sheet. An understudy for the last two seasons, Tyson now has his chance to shine and his skipper has every faith in his ability.

"He was fantastic when he came on and I don't think I've ever seen a goalkeeper come into a game from the bench and do so well," Thwaite said.

"He was very safe in the 20 minutes he had to play and was under a lot of pressure from the Adelaide fans, but he just took it in his stride and did his job."

"Jerrad is very vocal at training and I'm sure he'll bring that to the game against Brisbane on Monday. We all have every faith in him but of course we are very disappointed for Mossy who has been outstanding for us and

On hearing his diagnosis Moss was understandably devastated at the news, but was typically positive and already focussing on his return to the team.

"It's not the news I wanted of course, especially as we've just started to get our season going," Moss said.

"But these things happen in football and once I have the surgery done on Thursday I'll be looking towards the game that is marked as my comeback game. I'll do my rehab properly to make sure I get back as soon as possible."

"In the meantime I'll play my part for the club as best I can and give Jerrad Tyson and the other goalkeepers as much help and encouragement as they need."

Meanwhile, Thwaite himself received some better injury news today with a diagnosis of heavy swelling and bruising on his injured ankle, which should heal in time for him to take his place in the side for the M1 Derby on Boxing Day.

Fears of more extensive damage have been allayed but the Gold Coast captain sat out of training at the beginning of the week.



Jerrard Tyson's baptism of fire finished on a winning note with a vital away win in Adelaide. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

ADELAIDE UNITED FC MEDIA STATEMENT

Late on 20 December 2011, Rini Coolen through his solicitors informed the Club that he would no longer provide his services to Adelaide United FC.

As a consequence, his employment with Adelaide United FC ceased effective as of 20 December 2011.

Adelaide United FC regrets that Coolen has chosen not to continue his employment with the Club. Coolen has now sought to invoke a Grievance Procedure with Football Federation Australia. Adelaide United FC rejects that there is any grievance upon which

Football Federation Australia could adjudicate upon.



Rini Coolen makes two exits in the space of a week.

Victory & Heart Range Now Available Instore!

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Wishing football fans everywhere a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Caps

Badges



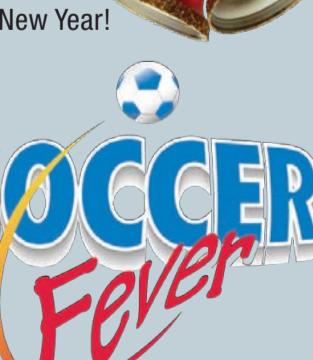
Tees
Official Strips



Hoodies



Scarfs



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SCOREBOARD

TABLE

		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Central Coast Mariners	11	7	2	2	19	9	10	23
2	Brisbane Roar	12	6	2	4	24	13	11	20
3	Melbourne Heart	11	5	3	3	16	13	3	18
4	Sydney FC	11	5	3	3	14	12	2	18
5	Melbourne Victory	11	3	6	2	14	13	1	15
6	Wellington Phoenix	12	4	3	5	13	13	0	15
7	Newcastle Jets	11	4	1	6	12	17	-5	13
8	Perth Glory	11	4	1	6	10	15	-5	13
9	Adelaide United	11	2	4	5	8	21	-13	10
10	Gold Coast United	11	2	3	6	14	18	-4	9

THIS WEEK

Week 12	Fixture
Thur 22 Dec 2011	Sydney FC v Adelaide United
Fri 23 Dec 2011	Wellington Phoenix v Newcastle Jets
Fri 23 Dec 2011	Melbourne Heart v Melbourne Victory
Fri 23 Dec 2011	Perth Glory v Central Coast Mariners
Mon 26 Dec 2011	Gold Coast United v Brisbane Roar

NEXT WEEK

Week 13	Fixture
Thur 29 Dec 2011	Sydney FC v Melbourne Heart
Fri 30 Dec 2011	Adelaide United v Wellington Phoenix
Sat 31 Dec 2011	Newcastle Jets v Perth Glory
Sat 31 Dec 2011	Central Coast Mariners v Gold Coast United
Sat 31 Dec 2011	Brisbane Roar v Melbourne Victory

ROUND 11

RESULTS			
Adelaide United	0	Brisbane Roar	1
Gold Coast	3	(Kofi Danning 83')	2
(Ben Halloran 18, Maceo Ringers 36, Dylan Macallister 92)			
Newcastle Jets	1	Perth Glory	1
(Jeremy Brockie 25')		(Billy Mehmet 35')	
Sydney FC	2	Melbourne Heart	2
(Bruno Cazarine 59', Juho Makela 84')		(Matt Thompson 33', Mate Dugandzic 87')	
Melbourne Victory	3		
(Archie Thompson 4', Vince Lia (og) 22', Diogo Ferreira 25')			
Wellington Phoenix	1		
(Alex Smith 85')			

TOP GOAL SCORERS

- 9 - Besart Berisha (Roar)
 5 - Ryan Griffiths (Jets), Shane Smeltz (Glory), Carlos Hernandez (Victory), Mate Dugandzic (Heart), Archie Thompson (Victory),
 4 - James Brown (GCUFC), Nick Carle (SFC), Jeremy Brockie (Jets), Henrique (Roar), Matt Simon (Mariners),



Melbourne Heart's Mate Dugandzic joins the leading scorers after scoring the late winner in Perth.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK ROUND 10

Compiled by Steven Talevski



GK: Mathew Ryan – He may have conceded an unlucky goal but a series of great saves helped the Mariners defeat Brisbane to go top of the table.

RB: Pedj Bojic – The mariner made a terrific run which allowed him to find the back of the net to allow Central Coast to inflict some revenge on Brisbane Roar for last season's grand final loss.

CB: Pascal Bosschaart – Another solid performance in defence from the Dutchman along with a fantastic lobbed cross to Juho Makela for Sydney FC's winner earns him another appearance in Goal! Weekly's team of the week.

CB: Kristian Rees – The central defender had a solid game in defence for the Gold Coast helping them towards this week's only clean sheet in the Hyundai A-League.

LB: Aziz Behich – Behich had a solid game in defence before John van't Schip masterstroke to push him up the field lead to the youngster being involved in the winner after his shot was saved by Danny Vukovic which saw Mate Dugandzic score the rebound.

RCM: Carlos Hernandez – The Costa Rican international was involved in all three Melbourne

Victory's goals in an impressive performance in midfield.

CM: Mustafa Amini – Punished Brisbane Roar goalkeeper Michael Theoklitos by smashing the ball into the back of the net to open the scoring at Suncorp Stadium after a woeful clearance by the Roar goalkeeper.

LCM: Alex Smith – The American scored his first A-League goal with a fantastic outside of the foot effort and was the only shining light in a lacklustre Phoenix performance.

RW: Mate Dugandzic – Another great game by the youngster saw him seal the winner for Melbourne Heart as they prepare for their Christmas cracker against Melbourne Victory.

ST: Archie Thompson – The Melbourne Victory number 10 continues to create opposition defences nightmares as he opened the scoring for the Victory and linked up well with Harry Kewell and Carlos Hernandez throughout the match.

LW: Ben Halloran – The 19 year old had a great game as he opened the scoring for the Gold Coast through a deflection before assisting Maceo Ringers to double Gold Coast's lead in their three nil victory over Adelaide United.

Star Man

Carlos Hernandez
Melb Victory



Carlos Hernandez provided a stellar performance which was only missing a goal for himself in Melbourne Victory's 3-1 victory over Wellington Phoenix. The 29 year old was involved in all three of Melbourne's goals along with numerous other chances as he was able to link up well with strikers Archie Thompson and Harry Kewell. The Costa Rican seems to be reaching peak form at an important time in the season as the Melbourne Victory prepare for the Melbourne Derby.

Thank God It's GW on a Friday... Now available at all good newsagents every Friday
Also available at Heart & Victory & Jets & Adelaide home games

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Adelaide United



0

Gold Coast United



3

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 0
 Gold Coast United 3 (Halloran 19',
 Rigters 36', Macallister 90+3')
 Referee: Ryan Sheppard
 Crowd: 7,967 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United line-up: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk), 3.Nigel Boogaard, 4.Jon McKain (c), 5.Daniel Mullen (14.Cameron Watson 68'), 7.Zenon Caravella (24.Teeboy KAMARA 63'), 9.Sergio van Dijk, 10.Dario Vidosic, 11.Bruce Djite, 17.Iain Ramsay, 18.Fabian Barbiero, 21.Francisco Usucar (16.Spase Dilevski 46')

Substitutes not used: 20.Mark Birighitti (gk)
 Yellow Cards: McKain 35', Dilevski 73', Djite 85'
 Red Cards: Nil

Gold Coast United line-up: 1.Glen Moss (gk) (20.Jerrad Tyson (gk) 69'), 3.Michael Thwaite (c), 5.Kristian Rees, 6.Paul Beekmans, 12.Dylan Macallister, 13.Ante Rozic, 14.Ben Halloran, 15.Adama Traore, 16.Maceo Rigters (23.Dylan McGowan 77'), 18.James Brown (28.Daniel Bowles 90+3'), 22.Peter Jungschlager

Substitutes not used: 17.Chris Harold
 Yellow Cards: Macallister 43', Rozic 64'/76', Thwaite 89'
 Red Cards: Rozic 76'



Iain Ramsey and Dylan MacAllister give their version of Swan Lake. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Gold Coast pile the misery on Adelaide

By Nat Adamopoulos

Round 11 of the Hyundai A-League saw the battle of the cellar dwellers where bottom placed Gold Coast United staged a brazen 3:0 win over troubled Adelaide United on Friday night at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Young gun Ben Halloran, Marceo Rigters and Dylan Macallister doing the damage and heralding a new all-time low for the South Australian side.

Not even a cheered-on A-League debut by the league's youngest ever player 15 year old Teeboy Kamara could stir the hometown side up enough to put in a competitive performance for their loyal fans to keep the faith. As with other matches, the Reds gave a false sense of hope to the crowd as they started promisingly from a great run by Iain Ramsay within the first ten minutes. His ball in for Sergio Van Dijk was then flicked on to Bruce Djite but unable to be converted neither by the striker or Dario Vidosic as he tried to mop up.

The Reds first goal conceded in the 18th minute was due to a defensive bungle which saw the ball being coughed up for a dangerous Halloran to take advantage of, shooting with enough power that Francisco Usucar's attempt to deflect found the back of the net instead, Galekovic nowhere near to stop the shot from going through. It was then Rigters turn twenty minutes later after giving the Reds some work to do earlier in the match with some clever play. His hard work paid off after Halloran set him up to score a thunderous shot in the 36th minute that even surprised



Gold Coast players celebrate Ben Halloran's opener. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

the Reds gloveman with the force of the strike. Bruce Djite was again trying in vain to get a score on the board for Adeelaide, again being a key player on the night but unable to produce anything. Reds Coach Rini Coolen tried some tactical changes swapping over Vidosic and Djite on the flanks to see if that would provide some rewards but was running out of answers as the whistle went for the half time break.

With the start of the second half Coolen took Usucar off for Spase

Dilevski to try to up the anti, but Adelaide fans were again disgusted by the way their side was fronting up to the challenge for points.

The way they were being too easily dominated by their opponents and the continual defensive passages of playing back were now proving to be a sticking point with the vocal crowd, the less than favorable comments being strewn out to players and coach alike heard loud and clear. A faint glimmer of hope looked possible as Ramsay had a shot ten minutes af-

ter the re-start that gave the visitor's keeper Glen Moss something to do. With the Reds being beaten across all areas of the park, it was time for Coolen's secret weapon Kamara to come on, his entrance onto the stage bringing the crowd to its feet. Clearly a crowd favourite, the young debutante had the crowd cheering each time he advanced or touched the ball, something they had been unable to do until now.

Gold Coast were continually breaking free, taking shots against the run



Fans let their feelings known as a dismal home defeat unfolds for Adelaide United. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

of play that almost hit their target with Macallister being one of the main hit-men.

An opportunity for Adelaide to turn the tide went by the wayside with only 15 minutes to go, as Moss left the field injured and reserve keeper Jerrad Tyson came on to fill his big boots and did so brilliantly covering a Dilevski shot down low. Another swing shift for the Reds came in the 76th minute when Ante Rozic was handed his second yellow and early departure from the match. But Tyson once again proved his worth in the 80th minute, stopping a long Van Dijk shot from crossing the line after initially misjudging the sting of the ball. But the nail in the coffin for the Reds came in stoppage time as Macallister went for the jugular, making no mistake slotting a ball in from a set piece in the 92nd minute.

The boos and jeers from the crowd were resounding, sending a strong message to all at Adelaide United that this dismal style of football was not going to be tolerated anymore.

Less than 48 hours later the owners took heed of the message, moving unsuccessful Coolen sideways to a junior development role and appointing former coach John Kosmina into the coaches chair to try to resurrect the Reds worst start ever in their A-League history.

Kosmina's first test will be to face his other former side Sydney FC in a tough clash on Thursday night where he has asked all his men to stand up and be counted and play with passion, heart and soul for the shirt but more importantly for the fans.



At 15 years and 212 days, Teeboy Kamara become the youngest player to play in the Hyundai A-League. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



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Newcastle Jets


1

Sydney FC


2
Match Details

Newcastle Jets 1 (Jeremy Brockie 25')
 Sydney FC 2 (Bruno Cazarine 59', Juho Makela 84')
 At Ausgrid Stadium
 Crowd: 13,658
 Referee: Chris Beath

Newcastle Jets: 1. Ben Kennedy, 2. Taylor Regan, 5. Tiago, 7. Kasey Wehrman (6. Ben Kantarowski 76') 8. Jeremy Brockie (15. Chris Payne 82') 10. Ruben Zadkovich, 11. Tarek Elrich, 13. Byun Sung-Hwan, 23. Ryan Griffiths, 24. Francis Jeffers (Labinot Haliti 60') Substitutes Not Used: 19. Matthew Nash (GK)
 Yellow Cards: Wheelhouse 53', Regan 73', Tiago 81'
 Red Cards: WhEelhouse 85'

Sydney FC: 1. Liam Reddy, 3. Jamie Coyne, 4. Pascal Bosschaert, 5. Michael Beauchamp, 7. Karol Kisel 8. Brett Emerton (23. Rhyan Grant 46') 9. Bruno Cazarine (24. Mitchell Mallia 75') 10. Nick Carle, 11. Dimitri Petros (18. Juho Makela 65') 12. Shannon Cole, 15. Terry McFlynn
 Substitutes Not Used: 20 Ivan Necevski (GK)
 Yellow Cards: Kisel 31', Beauchamp 70', Grant 90+1
 Red Cards: Nil

Sky Blues comeback over Jets

By Shaun Dyas

Sydney FC has deservedly beaten the Newcastle Jets 2-1 in a tense and tight A-league encounter in front of 13,658 fans at Ausgrid Stadium.

The win continues a solid run of form for Viteslav Lavicka's men who have now claimed 7 out of a possible 9 points to kick start their campaign.

The form guide could not read any differently for the home side who slumped to their second consecutive defeat in another flat and uninspiring performance.

Sydney playmaker Nick Carle summed up the evening after the match as it appeared that the visitors were more desperate for the 3 points.

"Credit to the boys they were absolutely brilliant. With 7 out of the last 9 points we have set ourselves up nicely." He said.

Jeremy Brockie was despondent after the match when trying to describe the effort of the home side.

"Our performance was poor and we were sloppy in the second half," he said.

In a contrast to their second half performance, Newcastle play was positive and lively in the first half and created a number of opportunities.

The first arrived in the 13th minute. Ruben Zadkovich streaked clear down Sydney's left edge and crossed early to an unmarked Francis Jeffers. The Englishman took the opportunity on the half volley and sprayed it well wide of Liam Reddy's left hand upright.

Byun Sung-Hwan was the next to test the Sydney custodian in the 17th minute. The ball was cleared by the Sydney defence straight to the South Korean fullback who lashed his effort on goal from the edge of the area. Reddy was directly behind the strike but could only parry and was saved by desperate defending from the Sydney rearguard.

In the 25th minute the Jets converted their pressure into an opening goal. The ball



Match Stats	
2	Saves
2	Attempts on target
11	Attempts off target
50%	Possession
3	Corners
4	Offsides
10	Fouls committed

Bruno Cazarine puts SFC back on level terms in the clash against the Jets. Photo: BEN NEVILLE

was crossed in from the left and was only half cleared. Brockie smashed the ball on the volley from 15 metres, leaving Reddy absolutely no chance.

Bruno Cazarine almost made sure that the lead was very short-lived in the 32nd minute. Nicky Carle was his usual crafty self and played in the Brazilian with a slide rule pass. Cazarine seemed certain to score but was denied by a desperate tackle from Tarek Elrich.

Carle then spurned a guilt-edged chance to square the ledger in the 39th minute. It was he who was this time played through

and was one-on-one with Jets keeper Ben Kennedy. The Newcastle keeper stayed big and smothered Carle's effort from 15 yards.

After half-time only one team seemed to return and Sydney started to control proceedings. They spurned a couple of chances before they finally claimed a deserved equaliser in the 59th minute.

The pacy Dimitri Petros tormented Byun on the Jets left-edge before whipping in a cross that was only partly cleared by the Jets defence. It fell directly to Karol Kisel who squared to Cazarine who had the sim-

ple task of stroking the ball in from inside the 6 yard box.

Sydney continued to dominate the game and continually stretched the Jets defence with a mixture of strength and speed and it only seemed to be a matter of time before they struck to take the lead.

Their moment arrived in the 84th minute. The Jets defence were slack in clearing a corner which fell on the edge of the area to Sydney centre-half Pascal Bosschaert. He lifted the ball back into the area and the Jets defenders were too busy trying to play offside rather than pick up an at-

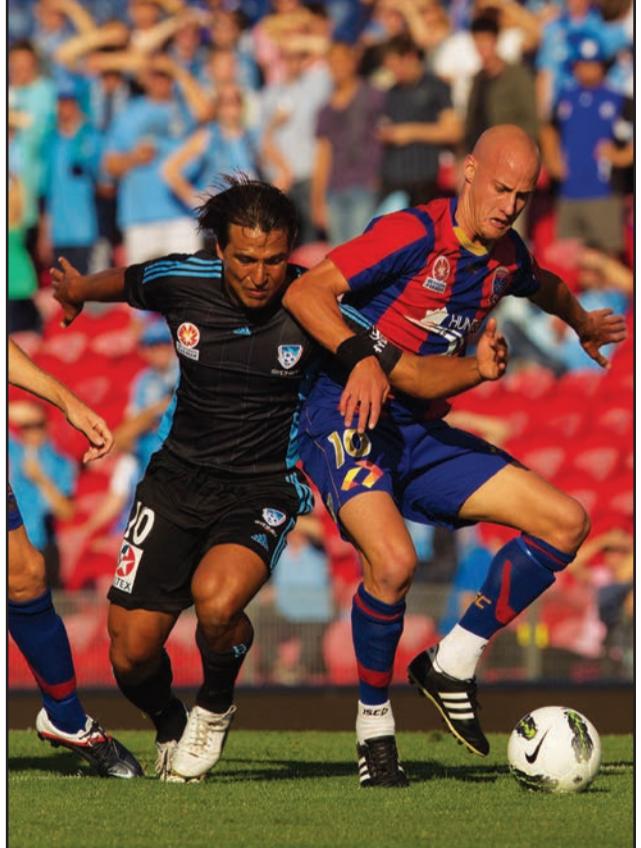
tacker. This time it was substitute Juho Makela who had the simplest of tasks, this time from 4 yards. A minute later there was time for Jets captain Jobe Wheelhouse to be sent from the field. He made a sloppy challenge that was worthy of a yellow card. He had earlier been booked for a similar challenge and the referee had no option but to send him off. The Jets will have to rebound quickly as they face the daunting prospect of a trip across the Tasman to face the resurgent Wellington Phoenix. Sydney will look to continue their encouraging run as they face Adelaide united on Thursday night.



Bruno Cazarine wins the aerial battle.
 Photo: BEN NEVILLE



Even Santa popped in to catch some of the action on the way to Xmas shopping. Photo: BEN NEVILLE



SFC's Nick Carle and Jets' Ruben Zadkovich tussle for supremacy. Photo: PETER NEVILLE

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Brisbane Roar



1

CC Mariners



2

Match Details

Brisbane Roar 1 (Kofi Danning 83')

Central Coast Mariners 2 (Mustafa Amini 6', Pedj Bojic 45'+2')

Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane

Referee: Peter Green

Crowd: 10,006

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theoklitos (Gk), 3. Shane Stefanutto (C) (19). Jack Hingert (46'), 4. Matt Jurman, 5. Ivan Franjic, 6. Erik Paartalu, 7. Besart Berisha, 8. Massimo Murdocca (18). Luke Brattan (65'), 11. Issey Nakajima-Farran, 14. Rocky Visconti, 16. Mohamed Adnan, 17. Mitch Nichols (9. Kofi Danning 57')
Substitutes (Not Used): 20. Andrew RedMayne (Gk)

Yellow Cards: Nil

Red Cards: Nil

Central Coast Mariners 1. Matthew Ryan (Gk), 3. Joshua Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 7. John Hutchinson, 8. Rostyn Griffiths 9. Bernie Ibini (12. Troy Hearfield 68'), 14. Michael McGlinchey, 18. Alex Wilkinson (C), 19. Matthew Simon, 22. Mustafa Amini (2. Daniel Mcbreen 77')
Substitutes (Not Used): 11. Oliver Bozanic, 20. Justin Pastfield (Gk)

Yellow Cards: John Hutchinson 27', Mustafa Amini 76'

Red Cards: Nil



A tale of two Matts: Matt Jurman on Matt Simon's tail. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Matthew Ryan punches clear the danger. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Sweet revenge for Mariners

By Jarrod Ellis

Brisbane's recent on field woes continued last Saturday night when they were sunk 2-1 by the Central Coast Mariners at Suncorp Stadium.

First half goals from Mustafa Amini and Pedj Bojic were enough to condemn the Roar to a new club record of four straight defeats less than a month after setting an Australian record of 36 matches with defeat.

Ange Postecoglou will surely be hoping his side isn't intent on pursuing the national record in that regard but would have been encouraged by the second half efforts of his players after a first half in which the Mariners were clearly the better side.

Disaster struck in the 6th minute for Brisbane when Michael Theoklitos suffered an inexplicable lapse whilst taking a clearance. The normally faultless keeper hit a clearance straight to a waiting Mustafa Amini who wasted no time putting the ball in the net from distance, much to the chagrin of the Brisbane keeper.

The Mariners have been in superb form over the past month and the memories of last season's Grand Final loss didn't appear to prey on their confidence as they quietened the crowd with an assured passing game and pressured Brisbane into turning the ball over cheaply.

Brisbane looked far from the dominant side of the past twelve months but were unlucky not to equalise in the 24th minute. Besart Berisha got a touch onto a Mitch Nichols cross but Matt Ryan was up to the task, saving low at his near post.

Brisbane looked like heading into the break having only conceded once but right on the stroke of halftime their problems were compounded by Pedj Bojic. The Roar had been having troubles down their left hand side the entire half and finally came unstuck with Bojic catching the high defensive line out and latching onto a through ball before scooping the ball past Theoklitos.

At 2-0 down Brisbane were already looking out of the game and the odds



Pedj Bojic makes it 2-0 with a driving run and strike, and the Mariners are on the way to dislodging the Roar from the top of the standings. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

of a comeback only increased when the teams returned to the field as Shane Stefanutto had to be replaced by Jack Hingert after an incident in the first half that left the Brisbane captain suffering from blurred vision.

Mariners manager Graham Arnold has spoken several times of his mistrust of 2-0 leads and perhaps that feeling has spread to his squad as when the Mariners returned they seemed a different side, lacking in movement and the defensive pressure that so troubled Brisbane in the opening forty-five.

That Roar on the other hand looked a side reinvigorated dominating both possession and field position in the manner to which football watchers in this country have become accustomed over the past

twelve months. However with Thomas Broich and Henrique absent there was little guile to go with Brisbane's industry and the home team struggled to find a way to break down the Mariners' defence.

Substitute Kofi Danning had a chance to pull one back for his side in the 73rd minute, using his speed to spring the offside trap Danning would have found himself one-on-one with the keeper but a poor first touch let him down.

Only moments later Brisbane fans were on their feet again as Issey Nakajima-Farran hit the crossbar with a long-range effort.

Central Coast were struggling to match Brisbane as the match wore on and the home side finally pulled one back in the

82nd minute courtesy of a Kofi Danning strike.

Berisha and Nakajima-Farran both came close in the dying seconds but in the end Brisbane's second half efforts weren't enough to make up for their poor first half and the Mariners held on to claim a deserved three points and top spot on the A-League ladder.

After the match Postecoglou claimed he was pleased with his side's efforts and reiterated his desire to retain Brisbane's style of play despite the run of defeats.

"I thought the important thing was that we finished off strongly," Postecoglou said.

"We had quite a few guys there who were running on fumes and to be honest I'm more proud of that second half

performance than I was of winning the whole thing.

"I understand that people don't necessarily agree with my line of thinking but we're going down this path," he said.

"We're not going to change, we'll keep playing out from the back, we'll keep coping goals and people will want us to change and do things differently but we won't."

"We'll keep doing what we're doing, we're not too far off the mark and we're showing good signs, positive signs about our performances and we'll keep improving and keep working on it."

"The areas we may be a little deficient we'll keep working and improving but we're not going to change and I'm not going to change."



That little devil on your shoulder: Roar's Kofi Danning gets a boost from John Hutchinson. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Pumping display increases Heart rate

Perth Glory

1

By Jacob Kagi

Mate Dugandzic's 87th-minute winner ensured Melbourne Heart's dream A-League run continued with a 2-1 victory over the struggling Perth Glory at nib Stadium on Saturday.

The striker's late goal saw Heart take the points for the third match in a row and the fifth time for their past six games, consolidating their grip on third spot and seeing them move within two points of second placed Brisbane.

The match had seemed destined for a draw after Perth forward Billy Mehmet's goal after 35 minutes cancelled out Matt Thompson's opener two minutes earlier.

But the Glory were made to pay for failing to capitalise on several promising build-ups in a second half they were largely in control of when Dugandzic condemned them to their sixth loss from their past eight games.

Defeat, which came in front of just 6458 fans, dramatically increased the pressure on under-fire Perth coach Ian Ferguson, with his side blowing the chance to move back into the top six.

Mehmet wasted an early opportunity to give the hosts the lead after an inviting Travis Dodd cross found the striker in space six yards out and his tame header was saved on the line by Heart keeper Clint Bolton.

Melbourne struggled to find their rhythm early in the game but it all clicked when Aziz Behic set up Thompson, who was invited far too much space by Glory defender Josh Mitchell and unleashed a fierce shot past Danny Vukovic.

The visitors capitalised on Shane Smeltz's inability to maintain possession to score the opener, but Perth's



Matt Thompson keeps the Heart pumping to clinch another vital away win. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

marquee man partly made up for it soon after when he helped to set up Mehmet's equaliser.

After Dodd did brilliantly to win the ball back in a dangerous position he laid off to Smeltz, whose neat pass through to Mehmet allowed the striker to work into a position to fire in his first goal since the opening round of the season.

The Glory then nearly went into half-time with the lead when Jacob Burns' fierce goal-bound drive was well blocked by defender Adrian Madaschi.

After the restart, it was Melbourne who came closest to scoring in the early minutes when Eli Babalj was granted

far too much space from a corner but sent his free header from close-range just wide.

But Perth gained the ascendancy in terms of possession and territory after that chance, enjoying the run of play through most of the second half. Smeltz went close to putting them ahead on the scoreboard on a couple of occasions, with one of the best chances coming when Bolton managed to deflect a Todd Howarth cross as the New Zealand international made an almost free run.

Dodd also created a pair of good chances, including in the 75th minute

when a quality cross saw Smeltz set up Burns, but his shot from the edge of the box travelled just over.

Burns then picked up a yellow card shortly after which will rule him out of Friday's match against Central Coast as it was his fifth booking of the season.

But that became the least of Perth's concerns in the dying minutes as Dugandzic's follow-up effort earned the Heart a hard-fought victory.

Jason Hoffman, who came on for Melbourne as a substitute, found Behic in space and his powerful shot was only parried by Vukovic into the oncoming

path of Dugandzic - allowing the 22-year-old to nod the ball in for close range.

Heart coach John van't Schip said he was delighted with the fighting qualities his side showed yet again.

"I think it was a beautiful, ugly win," he said.

"Last year, we also had these kinds of games and we usually had a draw or lost them."

"Now we're capable of winning these types of games and that is very important, because you can't always play good."


Shane Smeltz and Mate Dugandzic give chase.
Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

How the west was won: Travelling Heart fans share the Christmas cheer with their No.1, Clint Bolton.
Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

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Melbourne Victory

3

Wellington Phoenix

1

Match Details

Melbourne Victory 3 (Archie Thompson 4', own goal 22', Diego Ferreira 25') Wellington Phoenix 1 (Alex Smith 85')

Venue: AAMI Park
Referee: Matt Gillett
Attendance: 14,023

Melbourne Victory Squad:
21.Ante Covic, 2.Matthew Foschini, 3.Fabio, 4.Petar Franjic, 6.Leigh Broxham, 10.Archie Thompson (11. Marco Rojas 76'), 13.Diogo Ferreira, 14.Billy Celeski, 16.Carlos Hernandez (18.Danny Allsopp 72'), 20.Lawrence Thomas, 22.Harry Kewell (19.Ilsaka Cernak 82'), 23.Adrian Leijer

Unused substitutes: 20. Lawrence Thomas.

Yellow cards: Harry Kewell 15', Billy Celeski 19' & 78', Leigh Broxham 29'
Red cards: Billy Celeski 78'

Wellington Phoenix Squad:
20.Tony Warner, 2.Manny Muscat, 4.Brent Griffiths (11. Daniel Cortes 64'), 6.Tim Brown, 7.Leo Bertos, 9.Chris Greenacre (14. Mirjan Pavlovic 64'), 12.Nicky Ward (21. Dani Sanchez 67'), 17.Vince Lia, 18.Ben Sigmund, 22.Andrew Durante, 24.Alex Smith

Unused substitutes: 1. Mark Paston,

Yellow cards: Nil
Red cards: Nil

Rampant Victory tear apart Phoenix

By Daniel Quinn

Three early goals inside 25 minutes by Melbourne Victory have defeated Wellington Phoenix 3-1 at AAMI Park on Sunday.

Melbourne Victory went into the encounter with the same line-up who drew with Adelaide last week. Petar Franjic keeps his spot instead of calling up the now available Rodrigo Vargas. Phoenix only makes one change with the injured Paul Ifill replaced by Alex Smith.

Melbourne Victory created their first chance on four minutes and opened the scoring with Archie Thompson. Carlos Hernandez played the ball to Thompson who passed wide to Celeski, Celeski crossed brilliantly to Thompson whose header came off the post.

On 10 minutes Thompson could have scored his brace after he was played in by Harry Kewell but Thompson hit his shot wide.

On 22 minutes a Vince Lia own goal made it 2-0 to the visitors. Carlos Hernandez smashed the ball across the box and the ball deflected off Lia to fly into the net.

Three minutes later Victory made it 3-0 through Diogo Ferreira. The ball fell for Ferreira after a poor defensive clearance by the Phoenix; Ferreira then on the half-volley thwarted it home.

On 31 minutes Phoenix created their first chance of a Leo Bertos free-kick. Alex Smith was on the end with a good header but it sailed just wide of the upright.

Six minutes later Thompson beat Andrew Durante on the right before cutting on his left to fire wide with his left foot.

Just before the break Thompson yet again wasted another chance when he was played in by the impressive Hernandez, Thompson's shot was hit straight at Warner in goals.

Three minutes after the break Tim Brown turned in the box before shoot-



How sweet it is: Melbourne Victory players surround Diego Ferreira after hitting a peach to effectively make it game-over inside the first half hour. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

ing with no power directly at Ante Covic.

On 50 minutes Hernandez was played in and was one-on-one with Warner but slid the ball wide of the goal awfully.

One minute later Hernandez put in a great free-kick but Kewell missed the flick-on header and Leijer missed the far post poke home.

Kewell then had two chances in space of two minutes but his touch and pace let him down, Ben Sigmund was able to recover on both occasions.

On 58 minutes Kewell could have had a hat-trick inside three minutes when he beat four players as he dribbled

through the right flank into the centre but his finish was woeful.

Only one minute later Big Sigmund denied Kewell again with a last ditch block.

Not long later Victory were continuing to push forward looking for a fourth but Thompson's chip was saved by Warner yet again.

On 76 minutes Thompson got a standing applause as he came off with an ankle injury.

Two minutes later Fabio crossed for the left to Marco Rojas whose sliding strike was comfortably saved by Warner.

Melbourne Victory played the last

twelve minutes with 10 after Celeski was shown his second yellow for a block on Vince Lia and was sequentially red carded.

On 82 minutes Phoenix could have got one back but Covic saved Daniel's curling effort.

Three minutes later Alex Smith made something out of nothing when he got past Fabio and curled the ball with the outside of his right foot to snatch a consolidation goal.

Tim Brown and Smith both went close late on but Victory saw it out to take the three points.

Victory move up to fifth at Wellington's

expense who drop to sixth. Melbourne Victory coach Mehmet Durakovic believed it was his side's best performance all season. "Definitely was at best performance. The past few weeks we have been playing some really good Football and today we played our short-sharp passing game and kept it up from the start to the end."



Phoenix keeper Tony Warner manages to get his fists to the ball through a sea of body parts. Photo: DANIEL FLIS



Victory's Billy Celeski pleads with referee Matt Gillett after receiving his marching orders. Fabio can't believe it. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

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Sydney FC Line Up

1. Liam Reddy
2. Sebastian Ryall
3. Jamie Coyne
4. Pascal Bosschaert
5. Michael Beauchamp
7. Brett Emerton
8. Karol Kissel
9. Bruno Cazarine
11. Dimi Petras
12. Shannon Cole
15. Terry McFlynn (c)
17. Terry Antonis
18. Juho Makela
19. Mark Bridge
20. Ivan Necevski
21. Scott Jamieson
23. Rhyan Grant
- *two to be omitted*

In: Mark Bridge (returns from injury), Terry Antonis (returns from injury)

Outs: Nick Carle (hamstring – 2 weeks)



Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (GK)
2. Manny Muscat
4. Brent Griffith
6. Tim Brown
7. Leo Bertos
9. Chris Greenacre
11. Daniel
14. Mirjan Pavlovic
15. Cameron Lindsay
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
20. Tony Warner (GK)
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (C)
24. Alex Smith.

In: Cameron Lindsay (promoted)

Out: Nicky Ward (concussion).

Unavailable: Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite), Jimmy Downey (knee injury – 1 to 2 weeks), Tony Lochhead (groin injury 2 to 3 weeks). Paul Ifill (groin injury 1-2 weeks) Nicky Ward (concussion, 1 week).

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Sydney FC v Adelaide United

Thur 22 Dec SFS 7:30pm

By Mike Salter

Twenty-two players will take to the Sydney Football Stadium turf on Thursday night, but none of them will be the main focus of attention. All eyes will be on the pugnacious and endlessly quotable John Kosmina, beginning his third coaching stint in the A-League after his sojourn in the South Australian Premier League.

Kosmina takes the reins at his old club Adelaide United, which has endured a wretched start to the season. A crippling injury list, the keenly felt absences of several key players from last term, and the ongoing Andy Slory saga have all combined to dampen the spirits at Hindmarsh; although there have been one or two signs of life in recent weeks, last round's humiliating 3-0 drubbing at the hands of wooden spooners Gold Coast United was too much for the club's board, who have demoted former head coach Rini Coolen to youth team duties. How Adelaide will line up is anyone's guess, although in his first game in charge of Sydney FC Kosmina made few changes.



Radio broadcaster: 891 ABC Adelaide

Odds:
SFC 1.63
Draw 3.70
AUFC 5.75

All eyes on Kosmina

Underperforming stars such as Dario Vidosic and Bruce Djite might feel that their places are somewhat under threat with the new man in charge, and are likely to lift their game accordingly. Will Kosmina take a gamble on teenager Teeboy Kamara, the A-League's youngest player, in his first game?

Sydney FC, too, are not without their problems despite another heartening win in the last round, away to Newcastle. Playmaker Nick Carle has been ruled out

of the encounter, and it will be interesting to see who Vitezslav Lavicka will entrust with the duties just behind the strikers. A now-fit Mark Bridge may get the nod, but his performances in the "three-quarter" role have generally been less than wholly convincing. Young Terry Antonis, likely to be fit after his injury lay-off, may be utilised in Carle's role instead.

Kosmina, of course, is returning to his old club in more ways than one. Adelaide United was under

his stewardship in the first two A-League seasons, but his next stint in the dugout was as Sydney FC coach. He can expect a mixed reception from the Cove, who admired his commitment to the cause, but had problems with some of his selections (not to mention his public altercations with media and fans) towards the end of his time with the harbour city club.

Kiss of Death
SFC 1-1 AUFC

Adelaide Utd Line Up

1. Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c)
2. Osama Malik
3. Nigel Boogaard
5. Daniel Mullen
7. Zenon Caravella
10. Dario Vidosic
11. Bruce Djite
12. Antony Golec
14. Cameron Watson
16. Spaso Dilevski
17. Iain Ramsay
18. Fabian Barbiero
20. Mark Birighitti (gk)
21. Francisco Usucar
22. Milan Susak
24. Teeboy Kamara
- *one to be omitted*

In: Osama Malik (promoted), Antony Golec (promoted), Milan Susak (returns from injury)

Out: Jon McKain (suspended – 1 match), Sergio van Dijk (hip flexor)

Unavailable: Cassio (ankle), Evgeniy Levchenko (groin)

Wellington Phoenix v Newcastle Jets

Fri 23 Dec Westpac Stadium 5:30pm

By Joe Gallagher

Last Thursday morning, the papers were talking about the wealth of confidence Wellington Phoenix would carry with them on the plane to Melbourne.

There were talks of creating the best defensive record in the league, and the knowledge that the Phoenix were the only side in the competition not to have been beaten by two or more goals.

But by Sunday, Wellington was back to the drawing board. Cut apart in the opening 25 minutes against Victory, the half-time team talk was likely one of damage limitation, with one eye on the visit of Newcastle Jets on Friday. The last time the Jets visited Wellington was a humbling experience for the visitors, downed 2-0 in October without even raising an eyebrow for Phoenix coach Ricki Herbert.

All signs – thankfully – point to this one being a much tighter and closer fought contest than the last.

The hosts are looking to shake off the disappointment of Sunday's trip to Victoria and the Jets are searching for their first win in Wellington since the first month of the Phoenix's existence. As it stands, Wellington occupy sixth spot, and Newcastle seventh. The visitors this weekend will know that a win would push them above Wellington into a playoffs position, this with a game in hand. But on the other side of the coin, should Newcastle lose, they will face an uphill battle in 2012 to climb into the



Radio broadcaster: 1233 ABC Newcastle/The Radio Network 1035AM

Four days can be a long time in football

top six. That sort of pressure alone could be all this weekend's matchup needs to provide a fascinating early Christmas treat for the teams' respective fans. This term we've seen two Wellington Phoenix sides; one with Paul Ifill, and one without. And though Ifill is unlikely to start, Herbert will be buoyed by the performances of the Brazilian Daniel off the bench and striker Alex Smith, who was the Phoenix's sole scorer and best player in the loss to Victory. And playing at home, the Phoenix will always be tough to beat. Since two early setbacks in Wellington, they have

slowly gone about re-establishing their home record with wins against Sydney FC (2-1), and Perth Glory (1-0) in the nation's capital, as well as the impressive 2-0 defeat of Brisbane Roar in Dunedin. But Newcastle will do more than just fill up the team sheets – New Zealander Jeremy Brockie will return to his home country having lit up the first third of the season with some outstanding goals – the last a stunning volley in his side's 2-1 home defeat by Sydney FC. However one area which Jets coach Gary van Egmond and Herbert have in common is their away form. Phoenix,

who have been hampered by their dire results away from Wellington in their four and a half year existence, are this year bettered by the Jets. Newcastle have only picked up a draw away from Ausgrid this season, in a 0-0 draw with Adelaide United.

And so Friday will see a battle of two weakened teams: Wellington without their talisman, and Newcastle away from home. Desperate for three points to see them through the Christmas period, it could prove an absolute cracker in Wellington on Friday night.

Kiss of Death
Phoenix 2-0 Jets



Jets Line Up

1. Ben Kennedy (gk)
2. Taylor Regan
4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley
5. Tiago Calvano (c)
6. Ben Kantarowski
8. Jeremy Brockie
9. Michael Bridges
10. Ruben Zadkovich
11. Tarek Elrich
13. Sung-Hwan Byun
14. Labinot Haliti
19. Matthew Nash
22. Ali Abbas
23. Ryan Griffiths
24. Francis Jeffers
25. Jacob Pepper
- *four to be omitted*

In: 4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley (returns from injury), Michael Bridges, Ali Abbas, Jacob Pepper (all promoted)

Out: Wheelhouse (suspension), Wehrman (omitted), Payne (omitted)

Unavailable: nil

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Heart Line Up

- 1. Clint Bolton (GK)
- 2. Michael Marrone
- 3. Brendan Hamill
- 4. Simon Colosimo
- 5. Fred (C)
- 6. Matt Thompson
- 7. Rutger Worm
- 8. Maycon
- 10. Wayne Sroj
- 11. Alex Terra
- 15. David Williams
- 16. Aziz Behich
- 17. Jason Hoffman
- 18. Curtis Good
- 19. Eli Babaj
- 23. Mate Dugandzic
- 25. Adrian Madaschi
- 30. Sebastian Mattei (GK)
- *three to be omitted*

In: Simon Colosimo, David Williams, Maycon (all promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Jonatan Germano (hamstring – one week), Nick Kalmar (back – four weeks), Kliment Taseski (foot fracture – long term)



Glory Line Up

- 1.Danny Vukovic (Gk)
- 2.Josh Mitchell
- 3.Bas Van Den Brink
- 4.Billy Mehmet
- 5.Steve Pantelidis
- 8.Adam Hughes
- 9.Shane Smeltz
- 10.Liam Miller
- 13.Travis Dod
- 14.Steven McGarry
- 15.Tommy Amphlett
- 17.Todd Howarth
- 18.Jesse Makarounas
- 19.Josh Risdon
- 21.Mile Sterjovski
- 22.Adam Taggart
- 25.Trent McClenahan
- 30.Lewis Italiano (GK)
- *three to be omitted*

In: 8.Adam Hughes, 18. Jesse Makarounas, 19. Josh Risdon, 22.Adam Taggart

Out: 7.Jacob Burns (Suspended 1 Game)

Unavailable: 6.Chris Coyne (Achilles – 3 Months), 11.Victor Sikora (Hip – Long Term Injury List), 12.Scott Neville (Knee), 20.Neil Young (Abdominal), 27.Andrezinho (Hamstring 3-4 Weeks)

Melb Heart v Melb Victory

By John Clark

Melbourne hosts the biggest A-League game of the season thus far, when the Heart tackle the Victory in front of a sellout crowd at AAMI Park on Friday night.

The full house further enhances this fixture as a marquee event on the Melbourne sporting calendar. Credit must be given to the three parties involved in selling out the game.

The FFA's scheduling of this fixture two days before Christmas is perfect and it should become an annual event, the Heart's comments in the media this week added the extra spice the contest needs and the Victory fans who continue to set the benchmark for the support in the A-League, year in year out.

Onto football matters and both these sides find themselves in the top 5 after both suffering through indifferent periods this season. After five matches the Heart were yet to record a win and things were looking bleak for John Van't Schip's men. Six weeks later they find themselves in third position having recorded five victories in that time including away wins against Brisbane and Perth.

Last week's performance against Perth certainly wasn't the Heart's best of the season, but they showed a new found belief that even when they aren't playing their best football they can still take the points. The Victory put together arguably their best half

December Derby will be one to remember

Odds:
Heart 2.60
Draw 3.35
Victory 2.80

of football for the season against the Wellington Phoenix. Archie Thompson opened the scoring after five minutes with a glancing header from Billy Celeski's inch perfect cross.

Twenty minutes later it was 2-0 after Carlos Hernandez blasted a shot that looked destined to go out for a throw before taking a wicked deflection to nestle in the back of the net. Diogo Ferreira then joined the party with a spectacular finish that will feature prominently amongst the goals of the season.

The win was somewhat soured in the second half as Archie Thompson

Fri 23 Dec AAMI Park 8:00pm



Radio broadcaster: 774 ABC Melbourne/ 1116 SEN Melbourne

at the expense of the suspended Billy Celeski, however he is unlikely to start with Durakovic likely to favor Franjic and Leijer at the back.

The Heart have kept the same squad as last week and added three players, unfortunately diminutive Argentine Jonathan Germano will be unavailable again this week. There's hard to see there being much between these sides at the end of 90 minutes, either way it'll be another special chapter in what is quickly becoming the biggest rivalry in the league.

Kiss of Death
Heart 2-2 Victory

Perth Glory v Central Coast Mariners

By Jacob Kagi

Perth Glory will be looking to put a week of turmoil behind them when they host Central Coast Mariners on Friday night, but face a huge test against the league leaders.

After a sub-par performance in a 2-1 home loss to Melbourne Heart last weekend, club owner Tony Sage told a local newspaper he would walk out on the club at the end of the season citing abuse he and his family received from fans and poor crowds as the main reasons.

Although Sage has since backed down from those comments, it presented another piece of poor publicity for a team struggling on the pitch.

Perth had their chances against the Heart but succumbed to a late goal for the second-straight week, which was enough to see them fall to eighth spot with just 13 points from 11 games - nine of which came in their first three outings.

Ian Ferguson's side's biggest problem has been scoring goals, with their tally of 10 for the season fewer than any team with the exception of Adelaide.

Ferguson has come under increasing pressure during the Glory's tough skid and the club's impending tough run, which sees them play the top seven sides consecutively beginning with the Mariners.

He admitted he was feeling the pressure, but said he was still confident the



Radio broadcaster: SportFM 91.3 / Coast FM 96.3

Season on the line for Perth

Odds:
Glory 3.45
Draw 3.35
Mariners 2.15

results would turn around.

"I'm not going to sit here and lie, we're in a business that you know, you live by and die by results and at this moment of time, the results are not going for us," Ferguson said.

"It's not good enough losing your home games, these are the games you've got to win."

"We'll go back to the drawing board and we'll have a chat to the players and try and get something out of this."

The Glory will have to come up with something special to beat the Mariners, though, as the Gosford-based side is unbeaten over their past eight games.

That run, which has featured seven wins and just one draw, has seen Central Coast climb to the top of the league and move level with Brisbane Roar as title favourites with one leading bookmaker.

The Mariners have had no problems scoring goals, having netted 14 during their five-game winning streak which was highlighted by an impressive 2-1 victory at Brisbane last weekend.

Victory in the Grand Final rematch gave the side plenty of confidence, according to coach Graham Arnold.

"It was great to see the attitude and the character," Arnold said.

"They carried out the game plan to perfection in the first half (against the Roar).

But they know they can do better ... we were disappointed with our second half."

Bernie Ibini and Mustafa Amini have been combining brilliantly for Central Coast in attack and will be sure to pose a problem for the Glory.

The Mariners also pose the best defensive record in the league, having conceded just nine goals and one from their past three matches.

Kiss of Death
Glory 1-3 Mariners



Mariners Line Up

- 1.Mathew Ryan (gk)
- 2.Daniel McBreen
- 3.Joshua Rose
- 4.Pedj Bojic
- 6.Patrick Zwaanswijk
- 7.John Hutchinson
- 8.Rostyn Griffiths
- 9.Bernie Ibini
- 11.Oliver Bozanic
- 12.Troy Hearfield
- 14.Michael McGlinchey
- 16.Trent Sainsbury
- 18.Alex Wilkinson (c)
- 19.Matt Simon
- 20.Justin Pasfield (gk)
- 22.Mustafa Amini,*two to be omitted*

In: 16.Trent Sainsbury (Promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Nil

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Gold Coast Line Up

20.Jerrad Tyson [gk]
3.Michael Thwaite (c)
5.Kristian Rees
6.Paul Beekmans
7.Golgo Mebrahtu
12.Dylan Macallister
14.Ben Halloran
15.Adama Traore
16.Maceo Rigters
17.Chris Harold
18.James Brown
21.Daniel Severino
22.Peter Jungschlager
23.Dylan McGowan
24.Jonas Salley
28.Daniel Bowles
29.Mitch Bevan
30.Brendan White [gk]
40.Chris O'Connor [gk]
four to be omitted

In: 7.Golgo Mebrahtu (promoted),
24.Jonas Salley (return from suspension), 21.Daniel Severino (promoted),
29.Mitch Bevan (promoted),
30.Brendan White [gk] (promoted),
40.Chris O'Connor [gk] (injury replacement signing).

Out: 1.Glen Moss (groin injury - 8 weeks), 13.Ante Rozic (suspended - 1 game).

Unavailable: 9.Joel Porter (calf - 4 weeks), 19.Chris Broadfoot (ankle injury - 6 weeks).

Gold Coast United v Brisbane Roar

By Jarrod Ellis

This week Skilled Park hosts another chapter of the still fresh tradition of Boxing Day clashes between Gold Coast United and Brisbane Roar.

Gold Coast possess a good record against their neighbours but having lost the last two encounters between the sides with score lines of 3-0 and 4-0 United will need to be on their game come Monday.

Gold Coast enter the Boxing Day battle in last spot on the A-League ladder, largely due to their failure to pick up a point in five matches from November 6 to December 3.

But having come out the other end with four points in their past two games, including last Friday's 3-0 away win over Adelaide United, the Coast take better form into the derby than the champions.

Gold Coast's second consecutive clean sheet indicated positive signs defensively, however the sending off of Ante Rozic, who had just returned from injury, leaves the men in yellow light for numbers at the back.

The ever solid Jonas Salley presents a more than capable replacement for Rozic though and will return just in time for the clash with the Roar after serving a one-match suspension.

Miron Bleiberg will no doubt be thankful for his return given that with the injury to Glenn Moss inexperienced un-



Derby Day up for grabs in Queensland

Odds:
GCUFC 3.40
Draw 3.35
Roar 2.15

Radio broadcaster: 774 ABC Melbourne / 1116 SEN Melbourne

Head-to-Head
All matches (played 13):
Melbourne Victory wins 5,
Wellington Phoenix wins 2
(6 draws)

derstudy Jerrad Tyson will be thrown into the fray come kick-off.

Apart from his debut against North Queensland Fury last season Tyson has seen very little A-League action but that is set to increase with Moss undergoing scans on an injured groin/hip flexor.

In contrast to United, Brisbane's results have been nothing but disappointing of late and after suffering four defeats in thirteen days the Roar have slipped off the top of the competition ladder and now sit three points behind the Central Coast Mariners.

Personnel at the club have cited the

recent heavy match load as a contributing factor for the club's poor run of form and will no doubt be pleased that the players will have had an eight day break before they take to the pitch at Skilled Park on Boxing Day.

Speaking on Tuesday Roar manager Ange Postecoglou was unsure whether all four of the squad's injured players – Thomas Broich, Matt Smith, James Meyer and Henrique – would be fit to face Miron Bleiberg's resurgent United side but was hopeful the break would also prove beneficial in each of their bids for full fitness.

"They're all pretty close and they're

all a shot for Gold Coast," Postecoglou said.

"I doubt that all four would make it but we'd expect at least a couple of them to be right."

If that is the case then Brisbane should be expected to bounce back from their poor run of results, but with a United side that contains the likes of Maceo Rigters, Ben Halloran and James Brown up front the Roar could see their defensive frailties exposed once again.

Kiss of Death
Victory 2-1 Phoenix

Rewind



Robert Di Fabio

The festive season is a wonderful time of the year, and for the football community it's equally as exciting. The A-League season is starting to take shape, with teams beginning to stamp their authority on the competition. While the public is bemused by Brisbane Roar's diminishing trend – four defeats on the trot – the Central Coast Mariners are now the A-League pacesetters. While on the Melbourne front, the derby has absorbed the Victorian capital, amid a raft of media hype and exhilaration surrounding the fifth instalment of the inner-city rivalry. Perth Glory owner Tony Sage planted a bombshell on the ex-NSL champions, declaring he would relinquish his investment at the end of the campaign, although the mining magnate has since had a change of mind. Furthermore, Adelaide's turbulent campaign encountered another twist, sacking Dutchman Rini Coolen, replacing him with former coach John Kosmina.

Melbourne derby heats up
The fifth edition of the Melbourne derby will see the two Victorian foes battle it out for the city's bragging rights, in a game which pits third versus fifth on the table. The grow-

ing enmity between the two teams has been evident in recent fixtures and throughout the media, with both showcasing their desire to conquer their cross-town rival.

While Victory has acquired the majority of the headlines this season – failing to reach its potential, amid cultivating concerns surrounding the precarious future of coach Mehmet Durakovic – the red and whites have been treading under the radar, in successful fashion.

Winless in its opening five games, the Heart has triumphed in five of its past six outings, beginning to illustrate signs of its vast potential. Youngsters Mate Dugandzic – the club's top goalscorer with five – Curtis Good, Brendan Hamill, Aziz Behich, Eli Babalj and Jason Hoffman are developing rapidly, with the latter four re-signing with the club this week. Sitting third on the table, John van't Schip's troops are playing the best football in the club's short history.

Crossing tenants, the blue side of Melbourne have had a chaotic opening to the season, failing to live up to the colossal expectations inundated around the club during the closed season. Although, to Victory's credit, the platoon of star-studded players are starting to gel as a cohesive unit in recent weeks – despite results not always going in their favour – recently demolishing a weary Wellington Phoenix outfit at AAMI Park. While the 3-1 scoreline flattered the visitors, the host's, for the first time this term, dominated the contest from start to finish. The attacking combinations of Carlos Hernandez,



Bringing back the Biff: Hair today, gone tomorrow, and now back again. Kosmina does a 'Ashley and Martin' and returns to the fold....

Harry Kewell and Archie Thompson are looking increasingly ominous, while fluency throughout the squad appears to be on an upward fashion.

Whilst Victory may be the dominate alliance off the pitch, its dominance hasn't translated into a superior head-to-head record. In four encounters, little separates the fierce rivals. Both sides have one win to their name, with two draws a piece. While both teams are level on goals, amid five scored and conceded.

Friday night's meeting at the amphitheatre of Victorian football is primed to be a thrilling encounter. The beautifully crafted boutique stadium will be

the scene of a boisterous atmosphere, while game itself should be a great spectacle – with both outfits beginning to find their feet and looking good for the season ahead.

Has Brisbane Roar lost its mojo?

Depicted as the premier club of Australian football for a 15-month period – journeying on a 36-game unbeaten run, eclipsing any impediments or records that stood in its path – Brisbane Roar has sensationally been condemned to four successive defeats.

In unprecedented circumstances, Ange Postecoglou's men seem to be a

shadow of their former self. Faults have crept into their game, demonstrated by Michael Theoklitos' wayward pass last weekend, gifting young Mariners prodigy Mustafa Amini the opening to goal, to engineer Central Coast to a 2-1 victory. It's rather palpable, Brisbane are not emulating the type of form that had the competition fear it.

Whilst the Roar is still a force to be reckoned with, once the most revered A-League team by a considerable margin, it doesn't encompass the same feat factor it once did.

Devoid of key players in recent matches, including playmaker Thomas Broich, skipper Matt Smith and Brazilian Henrique, Brisbane's game-plan of team cohesion and unity has stagnated without the key trio.

The football landscape can change very quickly, however not all is lost for the defending champions, still with ample time to rectify its campaign. While the Roar has surrendered its top of the table status, the south-east Queensland derby in Surfers Paradise on Boxing Day could be the catalyst to resurrecting its season against bottom Gold Coast United.

The Reds go back to the future

After a calamitous run of form and arguably its worst performance on home soil, the Adelaide United hierarchy have acted swiftly to last Friday night's poor display, sacking coach Rini Coolen, replacing him with former coach John Kosmina, after being humiliated 3-0 by cellar-dweller Gold Coast United at Hind-

marsh Stadium.

The Dutchman, who was on a four-year contract, was demoted to Development Officer of the club's youth team, but has since rejected the proposal and is seeking compensation from Football Federation Australia. Kosmina, 55, returns to the club he was notoriously sacked from following the conclusion of the 2006-07 grand final loss to Melbourne Victory – with the outspoken South Australian unable to contain his emotions following the Reds' embarrassing 6-0 defeat.

Kosmina's unwavering passion was undoubtedly the vehicle which lead to his dismissal almost five years ago, although his fervour for the game may just be the recipe needed to ignite Adelaide's paltry campaign – which sees the club bolted near the bottom of the table. Under Coolen's tutelage, the Reds were playing a bland brand of football with only two wins from its opening 11 matches.

In a bold move, the Adelaide board must be commended for their courageous actions. It's never an easy assignment deciding a coach's fate; however the club's ardent fans, in conjunction with the football community had a similar notion towards Coolen's future with United. Adelaide has made the correct decision, with more than half the A-League season remaining and an upcoming Asian Champions League campaign, success is no bridge too far.

Follow Robert on Twitter @Robert-DiFabio

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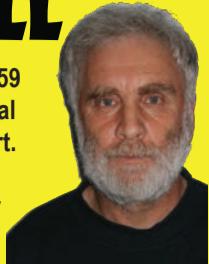
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with Roger Sleeman

SACKING OR DEMOTION?

Rini Coolen has been replaced by John Kosmina at Adelaide United but with eighteen months remaining on his contract, he has been retained as youth development manager.

It's once again a case of a club committing to a long contract without the necessary evidence the coach can succeed.

Perhaps the players should shoulder some of the responsibility for the team's dismal football and results but in the end Coolen just couldn't organise them.

The lesson is clear; clubs should be encouraging local coaches to ply their trade and destroy the myth that overseas coaches have a

higher pedigree.

Overseas coaches lack local knowledge and it takes a long time for them to

familiarise so why risk big investments in the hope they will deliver the goods.

Ironically, at the time of going to press, Rini Coolen had not turned up to the latest youth team training.

FMA 25 GREATEST

A great innovation to celebrate the centenary of football in Australia is being conducted by the Football Media Association.

A poll to nominate the 25 greatest footballers of the century has been set up with a comprehensive list of players people can nominate from and an

option to add others who don't appear on the list.

However, what is clearly evident is the scarcity of players on the list from the pre 1970 era.

The period from the late 1950's to the early 1970's was a boom time in the game and it's a shame the FMA didn't consult people like myself who have followed the game from the late 50's to

provide a list of great players.

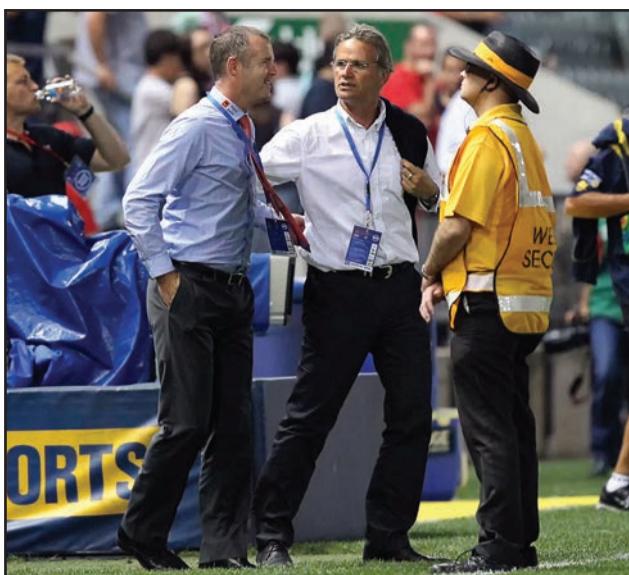
Notable inclusions would be Leo Baumgartner, Herbert Ninaus, Jimmy Pearson, and Karl Jaros, Willie Rutherford and Ronnie Giles and the list goes on.

RHYS WILLIAMS

Andy Maher on Fox Sports FC is certainly improving his performance but he really needs to check some details before he poses questions to the panelists.

After the Rhys Williams interview was shown last Tuesday night, Maher made the assumption that Mark Bosnich and Andy Harper had followed his club career in Australia before he ventured to England.

There was no answer from either party because Williams played his youth football for ECU Joondalup in Perth and I would be shocked if they had ever seen him play for that club.



"See you in the Youth League", Miron tells Rini.
Alas, Rini had other ideas...

Anyway, it was great to see Maher wearing a Melbourne Heart outfit at the end of the program to show he really is trying to identify with the game.

WEST SYDNEY FRANCHISE

Well, we've heard it all before and now it's Nick Tanna and Remo

Nogarotto who are reported to be interested in starting an A-League team in the West.

Frankly, with so many false claims in the past you would like to think there was genuine substance in this latest story because Sydney does need a rivalry just like Melbourne when there is going to be a 30,000 capacity crowd

at AAMI Stadium on Friday night for the crucial clash between the Heart and the Victory.

So let's stop the rumour mill and work towards the franchise being established sooner, rather than later.

COACHES

So it's once again that time of the year when coaches wonder whether they'll be round in the coming year.

Ian Ferguson at Perth Glory must be pondering his future after club owner, Tony Sage, was set upon by the fans.

He needs a string of victories to guarantee his tenure and with a full squad to choose from there's no reason the Glory can't compete.

Gold Coast may be at the bottom of the League but they have squandered many points through lapses of concentration but I fully expect Miron Bleiberg to lead the team up the table. There are too many good players like Traore and Rigtors for the team to fail.

Gary van Egmond has a lot of work to do at Newcastle because his team isn't performing to its potential, despite the backing of their big home crowds.

Finally, can John Kosmina resurrect Adelaide United and will Brisbane Roar reverse its current downward trend?

Celebrating anniversaries is not history

By Roy Hay

Mike Cockerill is a superb journalist and he has seized on the possibility of a good story about the Football Federation Australia's neglect of the history of the game by asking why the anniversary of the foundation of the Commonwealth Football Association in 1911 was not celebrated.

The problem is that historians spend much of their time trying to point out that none of the modern codes of football has a single formative date, nor a single figure who 'invented' the game at a particular point. This is a bit inconvenient for those who love anniversaries or who want to exploit them for commercial or other purposes. Of course, it does not stop the codes from deciding on a date arbitrarily and persuading people to join in their celebrations.

In late 1850 the Port Philip District of New South Wales marked its separation from its northern neighbour as it became the colony of Victoria with effect from the first of January 1851. Celebrations began in November and lasted five days. The final day was given over to a carnival of gymnastic games and the last event was a football match. The South Australian newspaper reported: 'FOOT-BALL—A match at foot-ball between

two sides of 12 each concluded the sports. The game was all on one side from the beginning, and won easily by Mr Barry and his 11.' Earlier on 26 August 1850 an eleven-a-side football match had been played as a delayed item in the Victoria Gymnastic Games originally scheduled for 12 August, but actually played over two days. The advertisement for the games was clear. Event number 16 was 'Football, Prize £11. Entrance 10s. The Prize to be awarded to the first eleven at the goal.' The match report was brief, 'After a little trifling in the shape of a pony race, the long talked of game of foot-ball came off, and excited very considerable interest and amusement, and led to a struggle which thoroughly used up several of our leading athletes.'

These were not the only football matches played that year. The Port Philip Herald carried an advertisement for a grand football match for a silver watch on 30 March 1850. In Geelong in November that year a three-day athletic festival included a six-a-side football match also for a wager. It is likely that this was closer to what became Association Football than Australian Rules as it evolved in the next decade, but it is hard to be certain. This is how it was reported. 'The game of football came next, Mr Hobson being the umpire on one

side and Mr M'Gillivray on the other. There were six players on each side. The arena was the cricket ground in the centre of which the ball was placed and the players stood facing each other at opposite angles of the ground. As the play proceeded, it looked 10 to 1 in favour of Mr Hobson's side, but one of M'Gillivray's party happened to give the ball a turn, it was taken up by Giles, another of M'Gillivray's players, who managed to kick it through the proper panel, and so won the game. Prize - £3, entrance 3s.'

Various points are important about these games as reported. This is small-sided football being played by teams for monetary or other prizes. While no specific rules are mentioned, they must have been played by some agreed conditions, otherwise the players and those who were gambling on the outcomes would have felt and been cheated.

These games were not the village or folk football involving large numbers of players and which were often accompanied by social disruption which so annoyed the authorities of urbanising Britain. They correspond very closely with the myriad games detected by Adrian Harvey, Neil Tranter and other researchers in England and Scotland which completely undermine the notion that

football was killed off in these countries by the twin forces of Puritanism and industrialisation and had to be reinvented in the public schools in the nineteenth century.

The third and final point is that these games in Victoria were being played almost a decade before the first rules of the Melbourne club were written in 1859. So something akin to Association football as it evolved and was codified in England in 1863 was being played in this country before the beginning of what the Australian Football League insists be called Australian football.

What is lacking for both the Association game and Australian football is continuity in these early days. Clubs were formed at the start of the winter season and ended when the weather was good enough for cricket. They had to be reconstituted the next year. Players moved freely from one group or club to another. Distinctions between the different types of games being played only emerged very gradually and the Victorian code established its hegemonic position over two or three decades. It was not until the 1880s that the Association game established itself in regular competition, but by then it was too late to dislodge the hold that the local code had gained among the Victorian population.



Football 1870s style. The Graphic, December 1872, reproduced in The Rules of Association Football 1863, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 2006.

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MELBOURNE HEART

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goal!
weekly



Top Row: Adrian Zahra, Kamal Ibrahim, Kristian Sarkies, Rutger Worm, Michael Marrone, Kliment Taseski, Mate Dugandzic.

Middle Row: Jonatan Germano, Brendan Hamill, Curtis Good, Nick Kalmar, Nikola Roganovic, Clint Bolton, Eli Babalj, Jason Hoffman, Maycon, Wayne Sroj.

Front Row: David Williams, Fred, Simon Colosimo, John Aloisi (Assistant/ Youth Coach), John van't Schip (Head Coach), Ante Milicic (Assistant Coach), Peter Zois (Goalkeeping Coach), Matt Thompson, Alex Terra, Aziz Behich.

MELBOURNE VICTORY

goal!
weekly

PHOTO: MELBOURNE VICTORY FC / GETTY IMAGES



Back Row: Nick Ansell, Leigh Broxham, Petar Franjic, Jean Carlos Solorzano, Diogo Ferreira, Fabio, Luke O'Dea.

Middle Row: James Jeggo, Isaka Cernak, Danny Allsopp, Tando Velaphi, Lawrence Thomas, Rodrigo Vargas, Grant Brebner, Matthew Kemp.

Front Row: Tommy Pondejjak, Matthew Foschini, Carlos Hernandez, Harry Kewell, Mehmet Durakovic (Head Coach), Adrian Leijer, Archie Thompson, Marco Rojas.

Friday 23rd December 2011

Marcos ready to rock and roll us!

By Daniel Quinn

Marco Rojas is a New Zealand international midfielder who plays for A-League side Melbourne Victory.

Marco was born on the 5th of November 1991 in Hamilton, New Zealand to a Chilean father and a New Zealand mother. Football like in many Chilean families is very popular and Marco grew up with the love of Football and started at a very young age.

Marco first started off with Waikato FC in The New Zealand Football Championship. Since New Zealand have a winter and summer league Marco spent the summer of 2008-09 season with Waikato FC before moving to Hamilton Wanders to play the winter season.

Marco joined the Wellington Phoenix in 2009 through The Yellow Fever's scholarship program, The Retro Ricki Youth Scholarship, and his reward was to be offered a trial. After the trial coach Ricki Herbet was impressed enough to offer Marco a two year contract.

In September 2009 Marco made his debut against Melbourne Victory as a 17 year old. He then scored his first goal on his starting debut in December 2010 against Newcastle Jets.

Three months later Marco was awarded with the Wellington Phoenix young player of the year award. But despite winning that award Marco rejected their contract offer. Marco is still grateful for what The Yellow Fever and Wellington Phoenix have done for his career but thought he needed to move to take the next steps in his career.

In March 2011 Marco signed on with Melbourne Victory on a two year deal. Marco has settled in well and the Latin players' including Roddy Vargas and Carlos Hernandez have made things easier and has improved his Spanish.

Marco is a small statured midfield at only 168cm and 64kg but is great on the ball when taking on players. He either prefers to play as an Attacking Midfielder or as a Winger on either side. His left foot is almost as good as his natural right foot which is beneficial over opponents.

Marco is also a New Zealand International and has represented the Kiwi's on two occasions. Firstly against China in March 2011 then against Australia in May 2011 in Adelaide.

Marco has also represented the New Zealand Under 20's on seven occasions and has scored four goals. This includes playing in The 2011 Under 20 World Cup in Colombia where he tested himself against Uruguay and Portugal.

I sat down with Marco to talk Football, Family, Chile and Melbourne Victory.

Earliest Football Memory

My earliest Football memory probably would one of my first games. Like a proper game, maybe when I was about four or five. And I started playing on the little fields for one of the clubs in Hamilton. That's probably the earliest that I remember. That really stands out.

Football idols:

Overall would be Maradona. Recently it would be Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, those types of players.



Victory's Marco Rojas goes in to battle against Heart's Mate Dugandzic during the Melbourne Derby earlier this season.

Goal in Football career:

Just to play Football at highest level possible. Hopefully one day I can go to Europe to one of the big leagues. Like England and play for one of the clubs there but just to keep playing at highest level for as long as I can.

Do you have a preferred league in Europe that you would like to play in?

Not really, any of those leagues would be great to go to. I enjoy watching the Spanish league a lot so possibly with the way they play their Football, that would be the preferred one but the others would be unbelievable to play in as well.

What made you want to play Football?

It's just always been part of our family with Dad being from Chile. Chile is a Football mad country so I have always been mad about Football so I just grew up with it. I know Mum and Dad told me that they always used to chuck a ball to me and I kicked it around. It always has been there and my family loves the game and I grew up with it as well.

Which club do you wish to play for?

It would have to be Barcelona. That would be a dream to play for that club.

What are your strengths?

Being able to take players on one v one and being able to use both feet similarly.

My pace as well is not too bad.

What are your weaknesses?

Probably defending, I am working on it. Positioning and heading too.

How well do you think you have done this season in the A-League for Melbourne Victory?

I think it hasn't been too bad. I would like to get a few goals. But I am happy as how it is going and hopefully I can start doing more and creating more for the team.

Do you do anything different or special in training to improve as a player?

I always make sure I train hard. I always make sure I stay behind to work on extra shooting, just anything, just to stay behind and work on something, whether it is shooting, crossing, whatever. I always make sure I stay behind for a bit.

Do you do anything different or special in training to impress the coach/manager?

You just have to work hard; you have to make sure in the training session you work hard. Hopefully that impresses the coach.

Do you feel pressure to perform?

No not at all. Every game is just another game of Football. I love getting out there on the pitch and playing and to be able

to play in front of so many fans in a big club in Australia is amazing. I am just enjoying every minute of it.

Are you currently happy at Melbourne Victory?

Yes I am very happy to be here and I am enjoying every minute of it.

What have you learnt from your experiences in the A-League?

I just have been able to learn what it is like at professional level. It's been unbelievable the last two years. It's just getting used to the tempo at professional Football and playing week in week out and training everyday and it has been a great experience. I have been really enjoyed every minute of it.

You have joined Melbourne Victory this season. Why Melbourne Victory?

For me it sounded like the right club to come to help take further steps in my career. I just liked how it was set up, what was shown to me.

I heard Adelaide United and some overseas clubs were interested. Were there any other offers from any other clubs?

Yeah, there were offers. Victory were the one I thought would be the best for me that's why I chose it.

Were you thinking about moving to a European club instead?

No it was a decision I made. I am happy to be here in Melbourne. I have to make sure I perform well here on a consistent basis before I think about going to Europe. So that is what I am worried about now, playing week in week out and I playing well.

How have you settled in at Melbourne Victory?

It has been great. The boys have been really good and helped me settle in really easy. It's such a great city to live in as well, it has been great.

There are a few Latin players like Roddy Vargas and Carlos Hernandez.

Have they helped you settle in faster than first hoped?

Yeah everyone else too. I speak English and Spanish so that really helps with them, the likes of Fabio and all of them. It has made it a lot easier but it is great to be to talk to people in another language and it helps my Spanish.

What are your expectations for this A-League season?

Of course everyone wants to win the league and my expectations are that we want to be right up there at the end and to win the league so we have to work hard to achieving that.

What do you think of the facilities at Victory?

The facilities are amazing. The profes-

sional setup we have here is good, there is everything you need to help you as a player and it is amazing.

You must be grateful for what The Yellow Fever has done for your career? Yeah I was very grateful to be given that opportunity was unbelievable for me to start off my career in New Zealand. I am thankful to them and I always will be thankful for the scholarship they gave me and the chance they gave me.

A few weeks ago you played against Wellington for the first time. What was it like to take on your former club? Yeah it was good; it was good to be back there and good to see everyone again. But it wasn't different than any other game, there was a little extra because I was back at my old club but I treated it like any other game and I was happy we came away with the win. But it was good to catch up with everyone.

Some of the fans jeered you when you got the ball. Was that expected? Yeah I expected something to happen. It wasn't too bad, that happens in Football. They weren't happy I left and that is their opinion and they are going to do things like that. But I am grateful for what they have done for me but I expected something to happen there.

What did you learn from your experience in the Under 20 World Cup this year?

Just it was a good chance for me to test myself against some of the better players in the under 20's in the world. We played some good teams in Uruguay, Portugal and Cameroon and we were able to test ourselves against some good players and I was happy of how it went. It was good to see the level that they were at and compare it to us.

You unfortunately got injured before the World Cup? That must have been disappointing?

Yeah I was especially I think it was 4 or 5 days before the first game so it wasn't the best feeling. But lucky for me I recovered quickly and it wasn't a serious as we thought first thought and I was able to play in two group games.

The Under 20 World Cup was in South America. It must have been a great feeling to be playing in South America?

Yeah it was cool, it wasn't exactly Chile, but it was special to be there and good to speak Spanish since everyone speaks Spanish there so it was extra special.

Would you consider playing in South America in the future?

Yeah of course; you never rule anything out. I am just concentrating on here now. When my contract expires ill think about what is going to happen after that.

Recently, you took on David Beckham's LA Galaxy. What did you learn from this game?

There wasn't too much to be learnt there. Just to play against superstars like Beckham, Keane and Donovan. It was just a great experience since you don't get it often. It was an amazing experience.



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All Rini wants for Christmas is...

MACKENZIE AT LARGE

With Craig MacKenzie

COMMONSENSE not frankincense should be on top of Rini Coolen's Christmas wish list and if there are any wise men left at Adelaide United he might even have a suggestion as to where they can put their myrrh.

An apparently enforced job switch from head coach of an A-League side to head coach of the same club's youth league side is an unusual way to treat a coach and certainly a rarity since the rebirth of this country's elite club competition earlier this century.

From an outsider's perspective it's a strange way to treat any employee and my understanding is that there still are some employment laws left in Australia that address the issue of whether or not employers have the right to treat employees as chattel.

And now that Coolen has acted on legal advice and decided to invoke a grievance procedure against his employer we are on the verge of testing those laws big time.

The response from Coolen's employer is that Adelaide United rejects that there is any grievance upon which Football Federation Australia can adjudicate upon.

That is but the first thrust and parry in what could turn out to be a messy affair.

Prior to the announcement in the last 48 hours that Coolen had withdrawn his services from the club it had been reported that the Dutchman didn't attend the first youth team training session this week and now we know why.

Some pundits have hammered the club's board for giving Coolen a lucrative four-year contract extension at the start of the season and while that move clearly was premature it's worthwhile recalling the circumstances of his initial appointment in July 2010.

The club was ownerless when Coolen arrived. It was under the interim direction of FFA for a second year and a three-member panel had been convened to select the new coach.

Then Adelaide chief exec Sam Ciccarello, football director Michael Petrillo and FFA technical director Han Berger comprised the selection panel and Ciccarello was effusive in his praise of the pivotal role played by Berger.

"Han ... played a critical role – not just in the interview and final decision but in gathering information on all the applicants," Ciccarello said at the time.

Going through the protocol of asking FFA to ratify Coolen's appointment after he was given the thumbs up by one of the federation's most powerful coaching identities surely was a formality.

"A whole range of things were involved in this decision – knowledge, experience, the levels of football Rini had played and coached at and the fact he's a very young and ambitious man," Ciccarello added. However, Coolen's appointment came as a surprise as he was a little-known figure here in a field of over 50 candidates.

And although Coolen may have ticked a number of boxes as far as Berger and FFA were concerned one box he didn't tick was the one covering recent coaching success.

After being dumped by Eredivisie outfit FC Twente in February 2006, Coolen's next gig as head coach was with second-tier Eerste Divisie outfit AGOVV Apeldoorn. He quit in the February of his first season (2006–07) and the club eventually finished in rock bottom 20th position.

For two seasons prior to his Adelaide appointment he was in charge at RBC Roosendaal. The Eerste Divisie club finished 17th in his first season and 11th in the second.

Indeed, Adelaide United's third-placed finish last season may well take pride of place in the coaching section of Coolen's CV.

But a few short months later the team is struggling so the board decides to demote Coolen to the youth team and make him guide the club's junior development program.

I have nothing against his replacement John Kosmina. The former Socceroo is a living legend of the game in this country.

But what I don't get is how Coolen could go from hero to zero in such a short time.

Had he been left in charge till the end of the season and failed to revive Adelaide's fortunes then being cut adrift would have been easier to digest.

I said "cut adrift" not shoved unwillingly onto centre stage in what seems, from my viewpoint, to have been a vain attempt to make him perform a demeaning lateral arabesque under the full glare of the public spotlight.

More Bleibergs please

THE A-League's most colourful and controversial coach, Gold Coast's Miron Bleiberg, also delved into the Coolen affair when I spoke to him earlier this week.

"I don't live in Adelaide so I don't know how this story developed but I can tell you that I always feel unpleasant when these things happen," he said.

"There are a couple of angles to this. From one angle you could say that there is the issue of foreign coaches versus local coaches.

"From another angle you could look at how a coach is judged. Did the players not try hard enough or is the coach solely to blame?

"There are a lot of mitigating circumstances here from what I can tell. The same thing could have happened to John van't Schip and where would Melbourne Heart be now?"

But Bleiberg kept his powder dry for a shot at Adelaide United's board.

"In general I am against these sorts of things because it gives an excuse for the mob (supporters) to be too influential."

"If they (the board) are such smart business people then they should treat soccer like a business. You don't judge someone at the halfway mark of the season. These business



Bah, Humbug: Miron Bleiberg gives Rini Coolen a final parting shot from the A-League.

Photo: ADAM BUTLER

people are not judged week by week but they are judged on the result at the end of the financial year.

"Rini Coolen should have been judged at the end of the season."

By now Bleiberg was in full swing and far be it from me to break his rhythm.

I asked him what his hopes are for football heading into 2012.

"We live in an era of money. Health is not number one because money is number one. Money is king. Everyone that loves football wants to hear that the financial situation is good so my hope is that a very good TV deal can be made because that will be a big help."

"In football we try to do so much. FFA has half the money the AFL has but double the work, double the costs and half the staff. We have to send national teams at different levels all over the world. The AFL doesn't have to do this."

"Of course it is very important for the Socceroos to qualify for the next World Cup. People talk about playing good football but that is not relevant. What is relevant is getting there in 2014. Nothing else matters."

It's Bleiberg's refreshing bluntness that has him figuring prominently in my football wish list.

The multilingual and multifaceted former Israeli navy captain believes that his English is much improved since we first met way back in the 1980s. That is in spite of adding the word "homey" to his vocabulary, which proved costly earlier this season when he was slugged with a \$5000

fine by FFA for his description of referee Peter Green after United's 3-2 loss to Sydney.

Nevertheless, one of my main hopes for 2012 is for FFA to finally recognise the enormous contribution that Bleiberg makes to our game.

In fact rather than taking money from him FFA should be paying him for all the publicity he generates.

Bleiberg is to the A-League what Kevin Sheedy is to the AFL – a media magnet with an uncanny sense of what makes journalists ears prick up and prompts photographers and cameramen to start jostling for position.

There are not enough Bleibergs in football here. Not by a long stretch.

Thumbs up for Knox

THE new \$30 million Knox Regional Football Centre situated in Melbourne's north-east was officially opened recently amid some fanfare.

The centre will focus on Football Fives, a five-a-side form of the game that will be played on nine small pitches.

It has been widely reported that Football Federation Victoria, which will administer the centre under a lease agreement with Knox Council, will tip in \$1.5 million towards the development costs of the impressive complex.

For the federation that is serious money and some administrators have questioned the viability of such a venture.

Not FFF CEO Mark Rendell though.

Quite the opposite.

"We have developed a strong business case around this facility and this is a great long-term investment for the sport," said Rendell.

"Our business modelling suggests that we will generate significant revenue streams that will enable us to comfortably meet our commitments."

FFV is paying Knox Council a peppercorn rent of \$1 a year but in return the federation has committed to maintaining and replacing the pitches when they wear out.

"When the pitches eventually wear out we will replace them in lieu of paying rent. Our information is that they can last from between seven to 15 years but more likely from 10 to 15 years."

"We don't pay into the fund to replace the pitches until 2015 and from then we pay on a yearly basis."

It's going to be interesting to see how this investment pans out. If things go to plan then this will be a glowing legacy of the Tony Dunkerley administration that pushed the deal through at board level amid much acrimony and division.

I was told just over a year ago that three FFV board members were being denied access to inspect the site such was the bitterness of the feud going on behind closed doors.

But time heals some wounds and everyone smiled for the cameras during the centre's opening ceremony. Let's hope everyone's still smiling a few years down the track.

SEPERATED AT BIRTH



CHRISTMAS CRACKER

One is Australia's favourite football fanzine, the other is Australia's biggest selling daily newspaper.

One came out on Friday, the other on Monday. Things that make you go hmmmm....!

Seen any uncanny doppelgangers lately?

Let us know on our facebook page and you could win a prize.



Couch Potato Dept.

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



Saturday 24th December
03:00 am Arsenal TV Aston Villa V Arsenal
06:00 am Serie A Matchday 16

Sunday 25th December
03:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

Monday 26th December
03:00 am Serie A Napoli V Roma
05:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show
05:30 am 500 Great Goals
06:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlight
09:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Tuesday 27th December
04:30 am Magic Of The FA Cup Leeds United's Greatest Goals
05:30 am FA Cup Classics

Wednesday 28th December
04:30 am Magic Of The FA Cup Tottenham Hotspur's Greatest Goals
05:30 am FA Cup Classics
11:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

Thursday 29th December
02:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights
03:00 am Arsenal TV Arsenal V Wolves
10:00 am Serie A Lazio V Udinese
12:00 pm The Serie A Highlights Show

SETANTA SPORTS

Thursday 22-Dec
Ligue 1 Round 19 Teams TBC 4:55am **LIVE**
Ligue 1 Round 19 St Etienne v PSG 6:55am **LIVE**
Saturday 24-Dec
Scottish Premier League Round 20 St Mirren v Rangers 11:40pm **LIVE**

Sunday 25-Dec
Scottish Premier League Round 20 Dundee United v Hibernian 1:45am 1st Airing

Thursday 29-Dec
Scottish Premier League Round 21 Celtic v Rangers 6:40am **LIVE**

Scottish Premier League Round 21 Hibernian v Inverness 8:45am 1st Airing

Monday 2-Jan
Scottish Premier League Round 22 Hibernian v Hearts 11:10pm **LIVE**

Tuesday 3-Jan
Scottish Premier League Round 22 Dunfermline v Celtic 1:55am **LIVE**

Scottish Premier League Round 22 Kilmarnock v St Mirren 12:15pm 1st Airing

Friday 6-Jan
Blue Square Premier Round 28 Cambridge v Southport 6:25am **LIVE**

Saturday 7-Jan
FA Cup Round 3 Birmingham v Wolves 11:25pm **LIVE**



The Futbol Town Show
Every Tuesday 7pm

Extra Time Magazine Show
Every Tuesday 7.30pm

SMFC TV
Channel 31
Every Wed 7pm

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday 10.30am



Alvaro Rodriguez's

NAME: Finland
CAPITAL: Helsinki
POPULATION: (2011 approx.) 5,391,699
CONFEDERATION: UEFA
FIFA WORLD RANKING: 88th

WHO ARE YA?

The Republic of Finland is located in Scandinavia, bordered by Sweden, Norway and Russia, and has the distinction of being one of only two Scandinavian/Nordic nations that is a republic and not a monarchy (the other being Iceland).

The history of this land stretches back to the hunter-gatherer tribes that arose during the last Ice Age circa 8500 BC - within a few millennia, their descendants had developed their own language (precursor to modern Finnish and the regional Saami tongue) and lived off the land as fishermen.

However the neighbouring Swedes subjugated the land during the Crusades (circa 1150 AD), not only incorporating Finland into the Swedish kingdom but forcefully converting native Finns to Christianity (but also spreading Old Norse culture/traditions such as the worship of Odin, Valhalla etc. which supplanted native Finnish folklore to an extent) - this cross-pollination of folklore did however, result in traditions unto themselves, such as Santa Claus! (the historical St. Nicholas was remodelled within Nordic culture as the bearded, red-hatted 'Tomte', giver of presents)

The Swedish occupation of Finland continued well into the millennium, ending in the mid-late 1700s when the Russian Empire swiftly defeated the Swedes in a series of wars.

Led by tsars Peter the Great and later Elizabeth of Russia, the Romanov dynasty annexed Finland and made it a grand duchy within the Empire. Despite being granted considerably more autonomy than they had by the Swedes, there were Finns who sought complete independence - and Russia's entry into WWI as well as the subsequent October Revolution gave them their chance. Russia's subsequent civil war between the Bolshevik 'reds' and tsarist/Kerensky-ist 'whites' did not spare Finland and its own idealist factions. But in 1919 the Bolsheviks relinquished Finland, which achieved independence and became a republic despite some support for the idea of becoming a monarchy led by Prince Frederick-Charles of Hesse, brother-in-law of the German Kaiser.

Peace was interrupted by the onset of WWII and conflict with the Soviet Union, which saw the Finns become

Planet Football

No.187



Sydney FC's Juho Mäkelä winning a header in his HJK Helsinki days against FC Honka]

ish Cups too.

Despite being Finland's most frequent representative in European club competition, it has only qualified for the group stages of a tournament twice - the 1995 Intertoto Cup and the 1998-99 Champions League's Group F where they finished last, although hardly shameful considering their opposition was Benfica, PSV Eindhoven and Kaiserslautern.

They will get another crack at Europe though, given they won the Veikkausliiga title in October this year.

FC Haka are the next-strongest club with 9 titles and multiple stabs at Europe themselves, although with the distinction of losing quarter-finalists to Juventus in the 1985-86 UEFA Cup-Winners' Cup. Although nowhere near as successful as the big two, Tampere United and FC Honka would be the next-best-known Finnish clubs by virtue of their own (albeit fruitless) European sojourns.

SO WHAT YOU DONE?

Football is traditionally somewhat less popular in Finland than in its Scandinavian neighbours, with ice hockey and winter-season extreme sports better favoured by Finns.

It is the last-remaining mainland Scandinavian nation to have never qualified for either the World Cup or Euro Championship - until relatively recently the Finns had a lackluster record in qualifiers for both tournaments, with the exception of missing Euro '80 qualification by a point to Greece (Hungary was also ahead on goal-difference).

However things have begun to look up in the last 15 or so years, with the country now a steady exporter of playing talent abroad which has strengthened the national team's standing, as well as the improving performances of its clubs in European competition.

BIG CLUBS

HJK Helsinki is the country's most popular and successful club, with 24 Veikkausliiga (Finnish Championship) titles, runners-up 13 times and 11 Finn-

ish Cup titles.

For the aforementioned clubs HJK wears the North Melbourne/Sheffield Wednesday template of blue & white-striped top, blue shorts and blue socks (although white ones are sometimes used too); FC Haka ironically wears white and black like New Zealand sports teams (not deliberately I'm sure); Honka wear a mostly-black strip with yellow and white trimmings (although have at times worn a Wellington Phoenix-style strip) while Tampere plays in a soft-blue number.

HOT: Rini Coolen is demoted to youth coach at Adelaide United to be replaced by that time-honoured arch-foe of Kevin Muscat and Victorian football fans everywhere...John Kosmina. The South Australian and Socceroo icon resumes the reins of the club whose maiden NSL and A-League campaigns he steered, in 2003-04 and 2005-06 respectively. This despite the fact he will be ineligible to coach the side in their upcoming Asian Champions League campaign due to insufficient qualifications, but from a fans' POV it should be entertaining to have Kossie back. Love or loathe him, he is a true character of Oz football who alone makes up for the apparent scarcity of such figures at the game's top levels.

NOT: I realise full well I'm likely in the minority whenever this topic comes up, but it does irk me every year when detractors come out of the woodwork slating the FIFA World Club Cup or Championship, whatever you wanna call it, as a 'Mickey-Mouse comp' and use rare instances such as David Villa's leg injury vs. Qatar's Al-Sadd in this year's edition as legit reasons why the event should be canned altogether. I and no-one doubts that standard-wise the UEFA Champions League is the best club comp in the world but as it isn't open to clubs from anywhere in the world, an event IS needed that pits Europe and South America's best against those from the rest of the world. Football is THE world game after all, so how remiss would it be for FIFA to scrap this tournament or just as badly, revert to the Euro/South America-exclusive Toyota Cup? Very, in my honest opinion.

Just in case the GPS isn't working...



MATCHWINNERS

Striker Juho Mäkelä might be the best-known Finnish player to A-League fans at the moment, given he currently plays for Sydney FC. A fan-favourite at HJK over his initial 3-season stint, followed by his return in 2009 after 3 years abroad at Hearts and Switzerland's FC Thun - in all he made 129 appearances and scored 64 goals for the club before joining Sydney midway through last season. Nicknamed 'The Surgeon' by the HJK faithful for his precision in front of goal (he won the Veikkausliiga's Golden Boot in 2005 and 2010), he also boasts 8 caps for his country and has stated that his playing in the A-League shouldn't impede him from representing Finland again.

Going somewhat back, defender Sami Hyypiä, midfielder Jari Litmanen and goalkeeper Jussi Jääskeläinen would be the country's best-known players overall, with Litmanen plying his trade at Barça, Ajax, Liverpool and Fulham between stints with his beloved HJK.

He is also believed to be the only footballer in history whose elite professional career has spanned 4 decades (he joined the precursor of current FC Lahti in 1987 and made his international debut for Finland two years later against Trinidad & Tobago - his last cap to date was an 8-0 Euro 2012 qualifying rout of San Marino in November last year, and played in HJK's recent title-winning team).

For his part Jääskeläinen is one of English football's longest-serving current 'keepers alongside our own Mark Schwarzer, having been a mainstay at Bolton Wanderers since 1997.

He has however retired from international football, despite briefly coming out of retirement as injury-cover last year.

Sami Hyypiä needs little introduction to Liverpool fans, as he enjoyed a 10-year stint at Anfield between 1999 and 2009 for a hefty return of 10 trophies (most notably the 2005 Champions League crown over AC Milan) before departing for Bayer Leverkusen; he announced his retirement whilst at the Bundesliga club in May this year.

In his international career he scored 5 goals and played 105 times for Finland - he remains the country's second-highest capped player after Jari Litmanen (137 caps).

SO WHAT NOW?

The Finns failed to qualify for Euro 2012, but are still able to dream of WC 2014 qualification - given they are in Group I alongside France and world champs Spain, dreaming may sadly be their only option.

Even their other opponents Belarus and Georgia have their nuisance value, so it will be hard going for the Eagle-Owls to reach Brazil - hopefully brighter days do lie ahead for the fledgling Scandinavians.

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Charles Perkins

BLAST FROM THE PAST



With Roy Hay

Charles Perkins was a pioneering figure in the recognition of the Aboriginal people of Australia. In the 1960s he led the freedom rides which brought discrimination against Aborigines into Australian politics.

He was the first male Aboriginal graduate of the University of Sydney. He became chair of the Aboriginal Development Commission and head of the Federal Government's Department of Aboriginal Affairs. For four decades he was one of the most recognised figures across a range of issues affecting the indigenous peoples of Australia. Yet it was football where he first made his name and football which set him on the way to his later achievements. As he said 'Football serves a three-fold purpose. The first was to provide me with finance for my study. Second, it enabled me to keep fit because I needed to study for such long hours. Third, it was the means whereby I could mix socially and enjoy myself comfortably.'

Born in 1936 near Alice Springs. His mother was of the Arunta people, a very inclusive group, and his father whom he only saw once, was of the Kalkadoon people from Mount Isa. Charles was taken to Adelaide at the age of ten along with several other children by a Church of England pastor. Among the Aboriginal children in the school at Marryatville was John Moriarty, another who made his way through football to an important career in Australian life. Life was very tough for the youngsters who had to cope with discrimination and abuse. In 1951 the state Under-18 was practising near the school. The boys from St Francis's took them on and gave them the runaround. Perkins and Moriarty and some of the others joined the squad soon after. That started the love affair with football.

Charles Perkins rose through a number of junior clubs in Adelaide including Port Thistle juniors, International United (Redskins), and Budapest which he jointed in 1956. His speed,

Footballer, activist, administrator

power and ferocious shooting skills were recognised and in 1957 when he was at Fiorentina a scout from Everton offered to pay half his fare for a trial with the club in England. Like other young Australians, including Craig Johnston and Tony Dorigo, Perkins found the gulf between the football he had been used to in Australia and that in United Kingdom was huge. Though he tried hard he could not break into the Everton team and though he was offered a part-time contract in the end, he decided instead to try his luck elsewhere. He had a spell with local team in Wigan and then joined Bishop Auckland. On the face of it this was a curious move, going from a top professional team to an amateur one, but as he pointed out the amateur players were getting just as much money at the professionals in those days of the maximum wage in England. A game against Oxford University opened his mind to the possibility of going to university himself one day. In the short run he turned down offers in England, including one from Manchester United, and returned to Australia.

Adelaide Croatia, presided over by the leading housebuilder, Branko Filipi, agreed to pay his fare home as they wanted his drive and direction for their push for promotion. Within months of coming home, he was helping the club to win promotion and cups as player-coach and becoming vice-captain of the South Australian

state team. His experience in England had sharpened his skills including his tactical awareness and organisational capacity. John Moriarty and Gordon Briscoe were two other Aboriginal members of the Croatia team in these years. Meeting the future premier of South Australia Don Dunstan helped to develop his interest in the politics of Aboriginal advancement and in 1961 he moved to Sydney. After a false start at Bankstown he was offered a contract at Pan Hellenic, where he was an immediate hit. Once he settled among the Greek community he combined success on the football field with study for matriculation and then at Sydney University. Under his leadership Pan Hellenic finished fourth in Division One in New South Wales in 1961 and 1963. He finished his career as a player at Bankstown in 1965, but he remained involved in the game off the field.

When the National Soccer League started he was president of Canberra City and became a member of the Australian Soccer Federation and its vice-president in 1987. He also helped promote the indoor game in Canberra along with his long time friend Johnny Warren and was president of the Australian Indoor Soccer Federation for a decade. He never forgot what he owed to the game and his autobiography *A Bastard like Me* tells the story, warts and all. His influence persisted long after he died in 2000, because he paved the way by



Charles Perkins in action. Source: John Maynard, *The Aboriginal Soccer Tribe*, p. 51, from Australian Soccer Weekly via Paul and Colin Tatz.

his example for the next generation of talent to come through. Harry Williams worked closely with Perkins in Aboriginal support services in Rockdale in Sydney and went on to play for

Australia in the World Cup in Germany in 1974. The modern generation of Aboriginal players, men and women, owe a great deal to the pioneering career of Charles Perkins.



Charles Perkins, activist and administrator. The Assistant Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs protests along with Bob McLeod and Allan Sharpley. Two of Perkins' children on his right.
Source: Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.



Charles Perkins with Adelaide Croatia's Ampol Cup in 1961. Peter Reid, *Charles Perkins: A Biography*, pp. 188-9.



Charles Perkins (right) for South Australia versus Victoria. Source: Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.



Pan Hellenic in the 1960s. Back row, left to right: George Yangou, Charles Perkins, Soltos Patrinos, Jan Bout, Brian Smith, Nilo Rasulin, Joe Vlasits (coach). Front row: Chris Ambros, Angelo Mavropoulos, Doug Logan, Jimmy Pearson, Can Gumeras. Missing: Jim Hatzis. Source: Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.

Glory scales top of the NYL summit

By Daniel Quinn

AIS too classy for Victory

The AIS has defeated Melbourne Victory Youth 2-0 at Kingston Heath Soccer Complex on Saturday.

AIS' first chance was created on 5 minutes when Kwabena Boahene volleyed a cleared corner just over Keegan Coulter's net. But AIS got another chance to open the scoring on 13 minutes and did so through Central Defender Jack Green. Daniel Petrov's poor ball was intercepted by the tall defender who beat another defender before finishing easily past Coulter.

Five minutes later influential midfield Melling was next to test Coulter but his free-kick went wide of the net.

Victory went straight up the other end as Jean-Carlos Solorzano's shot was comfortably saved by Paul Izzo in goals. On 25 minutes Victory could have equalised through Petrov but his header was headed down into the ground before Izzo made a fantastic save to keep Victory scoreless.

Five minutes later Jacob Melling tried an ambitious attempt from just in the opposition half as he saw Coulter off his line but the ball sailed wide.

Yet again Victory was up the other end quickly through Tom Podeljak who passed off to Melvin Becket. Although the Liberian born forward curled his left foot shot wide.

On 34 minutes AIS made it 2-0 through Benjamin Garuccio. Matthew Davies put in a decent cross but Petrov's failed attempt of a chest down was laid off to Garuccio who tucked it past Coulter.

Victory remains pointless and AIS move onto 9 points jumping Adelaide temporally. AIS and Victory would take each other on again in the rescheduled round 2 fixture on Wednesday in Canberra.

Melbourne Victory Youth coach Darren Davies though individual mistakes cost his side the points. "We have conceded two goals from individual errors; one is from playing out from the back and told the boys afterwards that is not a problem because they are going to make mistakes. It's OK, as long as we learn from it. The other goal is from an individual error but the Daniel Petrov has been outstanding for me and he is 15 years of age and has been absolute brilliant."



Victory over-age player Tom Podeljak tries one of his tricks on Jacob Melling (AIS). Ben Garuccio takes note, while Yianni Perkatis is an interested spectator in the background. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Sydney snatch late winner

A late Jordan Figan strike for Sydney FC has defeated Newcastle Jets 1-0 on Friday at Adamstown Oval.

The visitors had the first chance of the game through Joe Gibbs but his shot was cleared off the line by David Talevski. Only two minutes later Jets had their first chance through Marko Jescic but his first-time volley was sliced wide; Michael Bridges and James Virgili with the great work down the wing.

Jets defender David Vrankovic then denied Chinese 10 yards from goal on around 20 minutes.

On 28 minutes Bridges went close as his left footed strike travelled wide of the upright.

Nathan Sherlock could have opened the scoring just before half-time but his effort from a great corner was looped over the crossbar. Ryan Norval then was Sydney's savor as he made a great low save to deny Kyle Bradberry.

Five minutes into the second-half Jared Lum thumped the crossbar from the edge of the area.

Vrankovic was next to test Norval from a great corner but the 'keeper saved the fantastic header. On 84 minute Lum made a great run through the centre which resulted

in a corner after the clearance.

Lum took the fantastic resulting corner which Figan got on the end of to nod home the header, just inside the near post.

But Jets were up at the other end immediately through Luke Remington who headed Virgili's cross. But Norval saved to deny Remington before smothering an effort from Jescic.

Teeboy's brace not enough

A Teeboy Kamara brace was not enough for Adelaide to defeat Gold Coast United as it finished 2-2 at Burton Park on Saturday.

Kamara who made his A-League debut as the youngest ever debutant opened the scoring early when he comfortably beat the keeper.

Not long later Kamara grabbed his second with a tap in after a great ball from the right-wing.

Just before half-time Mitch Cooper pulled one back to bring Gold Coast back into the game. Late on in the second-half Gol-Gol Mebrahtu equalised to take a share of the points.

Roar down Mariners

Brisbane Roar withstood the late Mariners surge to defeat Central Coast Mariners 1-0



Jacob Melling gets his foot to the ball to snuff out the danger to the AIS goal. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

on Saturday at Suncorp Stadium.

The visitors had the first chance just on 2 minutes but Justin Hayward dragged his shot wide.

Kenneth Dougal created Roar's first chance on 5 minutes and made Dylan Mitchell make a great save.

Mariner's Anthony Caceres had the best chance when he smashed a drive but only for Andrew Redmayne in goal to deny the midfielder brilliantly.

Brandon Borello's fast feet created the best chance for Roar in the first-half when his strike from close range hit the crossbar after some great individual brilliance.

Early on in the second stanza Corey Brown and Matthew Thurtell both missed inside the box.

On 60 minutes Nicholas Fitzgerald who made his Roar senior debut last week against Melbourne Heart opened the scoring. He directed the ball past Mitchell after Tomislav Cirjak crossed fantastically for Fitzgerald.

After conceding Jordan Farina and Mitchell Duke both had chances but couldn't force Redmayne to make a save.

On 87 minutes Fitzgerald could have grabbed a brace but his strike flew off the crossbar.

Glory move to the top

Perth Glory has defeated Melbourne Heart 3-0 at 6PR Stadium on Sunday to move to the top of the table.

The visitors almost scored with their first opportunity as Lewis Italiano in goal for Perth parried a long shot straight to Billy Liolios. Liolios' effort then was deflected into the side netting.

Two minutes later Italiano then denied Stipe Andrijasevic from a close range header before brilliantly denying David Williams.

The hosts took the lead through Adam Taggart after Joshua Risdon played in the Young Socceroo. Taggart then made no mistake in scoring the opener.

Just before half-time Tommy Amphlett should have doubled the lead but his strike was smashed into the upright.

Only 10 seconds into the second-half half-time substitute and super sub Zac Walker was played through but his shot was cleared off the line.

On 59 minutes Clayton Arnez doubled Glory's lead when he finished with a great header off some poor defending on a corner.

Heart's chance to come back into the game was made even hard when Bradley Treloar was given a straight red card for a tackle on Alex Canglia.

Results

Newcastle Jets 1:0	Sydney FC
Adelaide United 2:2	Gold Coast United
Melbourne Victory 0:2	AIS
Brisbane Roar 1:0	CC Mariners
Perth Glory FC 3:0	Melbourne Heart

NYL Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 Perth Glory FC	9	6	2	1	20	13	7	20
2 Melbourne Heart	9	6	0	3	18	15	3	18
3 Brisbane Roar FC	9	5	2	2	26	20	6	17
4 Newcastle Jets FC	9	4	2	3	20	15	5	14
5 Sydney FC	9	4	2	3	25	17	8	14
6 CC Mariners	9	4	1	4	17	10	7	13
7 Gold Coast United	9	4	1	4	16	15	1	13
8 AIS	8	3	0	5	12	18	-6	9
9 Adelaide United	9	2	2	5	11	20	-9	8
10 Melbourne Victory	8	0	0	8	26	-21	0	0

Next Round

Fri 6 Jan 12 4:00pm	CC Mariners Vs Gold Coast United
Pluim Park, Central Coast	
Sat 7 Jan 12 11:00am	AIS Vs Perth Glory
AIS Athletics Track, Canberra	
Sat 7 Jan 12 3:00pm	Melbourne Heart FC Vs Sydney FC
John Cain Memorial Park, Thornbury	
Sun 8 Jan 12 3:00pm	Melbourne Victory Vs Newcastle Jets
Kingston Heath, Cheltenham	
Sun 8 Jan 12 4:00pm	Adelaide United FC Vs Brisbane Roar
Burton Park	

Perth then finished the game off with their third through Jesse Makarounas who finished from close range.

W-League

Adelaide break 3 year winless streak

By FFA

Canberra United have one hand on the Westfield W-League premiership after a 2-1 win on the road against Newcastle Jets.

The result secured a five-point margin over second-placed Brisbane Roar with two matches remaining, while Sydney FC, who had the bye on the weekend, sit a point further adrift with a match in hand.

Brisbane needed a last-gasp equaliser to secure a crucial point on the road against Melbourne Victory in a result which denied the home side second spot.

At the other end of the table, Adelaide United finally snapped their three-year winless run with a deserved 1-0 win over Perth Glory.

Canberra United were good value for their 2-1 victory over the Jets at Adamstown Oval and they now only need to get past Melbourne Victory and Adelaide United to become the first team to go through the league campaign undefeated.

With Westfield Matildas goalkeepers Lydia Williams and Melissa Barbieri at either end, goals were always likely to be at a premium and so it proved until past the hour mark. Michelle Heyman unusually missed a good opening while Caitlin Munoz hit the crossbar prior to the interval, before the visitors broke the deadlock through American forward Taryn Hemmings.

Heyman soon doubled the lead to take her season tally to nine goals, before Rhali Dobson pulled a goal back for the Jets in the dying minutes.

In Geelong, two evenly matched teams did battle with second spot on



Reds' Katherine Ebbs (17) is the toast of Rundle Street after nabbing the winner to end its drought. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Adelaide United players finally get that winning feeling. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Canberra United maintain their unbeaten record after beating the Jets 2-1. Photo: BEN NEVILLE

the line for either Melbourne Victory or Brisbane Roar.

A tight contest throughout saw Tameka Butt hit the woodwork in the first half but it wasn't until 11 minutes from the end that the scoreboard attendant was finally troubled as midfielder Kendall Fletcher executed a textbook far-post header.

A win would have virtually sealed a finals berth for the Victory but Emily Gielnik adroitly steered home from close range a minute into injury time to deny Vicki Linton's charges.

The story of the weekend though was in Adelaide where the home side were finally rewarded for their ongoing improvement over the course of the season with a hard-earned 1-0 win over Perth Glory.

The result brought to an end a run

of 34 matches without victory dating back three years to November 2008, while their last draw was achieved 19 matches ago in November 2009.

Midfielder Katherine Ebbs created a small slice of history by scoring the all-important goal; her first in the Westfield W-League.

Adelaide looked to build on their lead in sodden conditions during the second half but after United's Rachael Quigley struck the crossbar, it was the visitors who took the ascendency to set up a rousing finish.

However Adelaide hung on to collect their long-awaited reward and move off the bottom ahead of the Glory on goal difference.

Meanwhile, a 10-player Newcastle Jets side has held on for a well-earned 3-1 win over the Perth Glory in their

Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 Canberra United	8	6	2	0	17	8	9	20
2 Brisbane Roar	8	4	3	1	16	10	6	15
3 Sydney FC	7	4	2	1	22	5	17	14
4 Melbourne Victory	8	4	1	3	16	7	9	13
5 Newcastle Jets FC	7	3	0	4	13	14	-1	9
6 Adelaide United	8	1	0	7	21	-16	3	3
7 Perth Glory FC	8	1	0	7	31	-24	3	3

Next Round

Fri 30 Dec 11 5:00pm	Melbourne Victory Vs Canberra United
Veneto Club, Bulleen	
Sat 31 Dec 11 3:00pm	Sydney FC Vs Newcastle Jets
Belmore Sports Ground	
Adelaide United Vs Bye	
Brisbane Roar Vs Bye	
Perth Glory Vs Bye	

postponed Week 6 Westfield W-League clash at Adamstown Oval on Wednesday afternoon.

TEEBOY SIGNS THREE YEAR DEAL WITH REDS

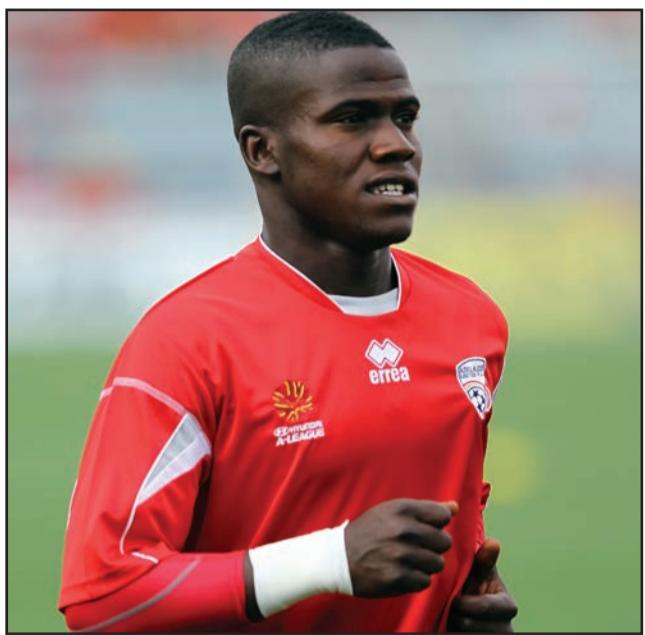
Adelaide United supporters can expect to see a lot more of exciting youngster Teeboy Kamara after he signed a three year deal with the club.

Less than a week after Teeboy's historic debut appearance in the Hyundai A-League where he became the youngest player to take the field in the competition, the Reds quickly moved to secure the 15 year old attacking midfielder on a senior contract.

Due to his age and the contractual conditions of Football Federation Australia (FFA), Teeboy's contract will only officially begin on 18 May 2012, the day he turns 16.

"According to FFA regulations a professional contract cannot start until the player is at a school leaving age of the state in which he resides," Adelaide United Football Director Michael Petrillo explained.

"In South Australia the school leaving age when the student can take up employment or further study is 16. In the meantime he will be a National Youth League contracted player before he makes the transition to a senior contract on May 18 next year." Teeboy's commitment to the Reds follows that of other talented young South Australians, goalkeeper Paul Izzo and midfielder Jacob Melling, to have been snapped up by the club.



It's been a huge week for Adelaide United youngster Teeboy Kamara, having witnessed the good, the bad and the ugly.

Photo: ADAM BUTLER

All three were part of the Qantas Joeys squad at the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Mexico earlier this year, Izzo and Melling's Adelaide United contracts to commence on January 1, 2012.

Already gathering somewhat of a cult following amongst United sup-

porters, Teeboy could not hide the excitement of knowing he would be a permanent member of the Reds' squad.

"It feels really good. Seeing Jacob Melling and Paul Izzo in the same shoes, it's awesome and I can't wait," Teeboy said.

"The last eight months have been eight months of joy with what has happened with my football, but I'm definitely not going to get ahead of myself."

"So many people have supported me – family, friends. I'm very grateful and I just hope I can be a role model for other young African people to follow their dreams and never stop believing that they can achieve them."

Reds Coach John Kosmina believes Teeboy's acquisition is a fantastic story.

"I saw him come on the other night and the way the crowd reacted to him was brilliant," Kosmina said.

"I asked some people at Croydon, where he played as a junior, about him and they said he was not only a good quality player but also a good quality person. For a 15 year old he's quite mature, physically he's a fantastic specimen, and last Friday night and this week at training he's looked comfortable – he's a natural."

Arriving in Adelaide from his homeland of Liberia at age 6, Teeboy's football journey began out in a suburban park where he used to kick the ball around with his brother and other kids in the neighbourhood.

His first club was the Croydon Kings where he played from Under 8's to Under 16's and was the place his potential became increasingly evident.

However, it could have been a different story as he also had a strong interest in Australian Rules. Fascinated by the game, Teeboy spent time in SANFL club North Adelaide's Under 13 development squad and could easily have followed down the path of another football code. But the round ball game won out and it appears to have been meant to be.

From Croydon, Teeboy spent one season with Salisbury United's Under 19's before joining the SASI program under Tony Vidmar late in 2010. While representing SASI, Teeboy, whose father was a talented goalkeeper in his day, was named in the All Star Team at the national Institute Challenge in Canberra and an invitation to the Australian Institute of Sport followed.

Teeboy was the youngest member of the Australia's FIFA U-17 World Cup squad in Mexico before a serious illness to his mother, which would tragically end up taking her life, saw him return to Adelaide.

He has played all but one of the Reds' National Youth League games this season, and he followed his debut appearance in the Hyundai A-League last Friday night against Gold Coast United with two goals in a 45 minute cameo in the United's Youth team the next day.

Rigters praise for United's young duo

MACEO Rigters has paid tribute to Gold Coast United young guns Ben Halloran and James Brown after the pair continued their impressive start to the season with fine performances in the 3-0 win over Adelaide United last Friday.

Halloran notched the first goal, his first in the Hyundai A-League, then kept his cool to set up the second for Rigters who thundered a 20-metre drive into the back of the net.

Both Halloran and Brown have been shining lights for Gold Coast this term with performances that have grown in stature week by week, and the experienced Rigters can't wait to see more of the same on Boxing Day as United look to build on recent results.

"Benny gave me the assist and he's doing very well at the moment – in fact every week he seems to be doing better and is more comfortable with his runs. Because he's so quick he can beat anybody and as a striker I'm very happy with that," Rigters said.

"Browny as well; he had a good beginning to the season and he's a very good player for the team. We train well together and we're getting to know each other more every week.

"It's natural for me to look for the ball and try to create something. It's the way I play and Miron knows that which is why he gives me the freedom to do it, so having those two around me really helps."

But United's youngsters aren't the only ones to be showing good form of late. Rigters himself has been increasingly impressive since signing for the club and two explosive finishes have highlighted his quality.

Come Boxing Day he is sure to figure as one of the key players and the Dutchman says the United camp are focussed purely on securing the three points and progressing up the ladder.

"The mood is really good. We have a big game on Boxing Day and we're all looking forward to that. We've been a bit unlucky with injuries and suspensions, but we're looking for a good result to move us up the table because it's no where we belong," he said.

"Everybody has been a bit surprised by Brisbane's recent results, but that's football. They had a long winning run and now they're a little bit shaky because they've lost a few. It's going to be a good game though because they still play good football so it's going to be a nice game at home for us."

"Even if they know how we are going to play we will go out there and do our best because we've showed that we can play good football and we can score goals."

"We've kept two clean sheets in the last two games so if we can keep that going on Monday we have a great chance of winning the game."

"We've been doing some additional conditioning training which has been hard work, but afterwards you feel better because that work needs to be done and I'm very happy with that."



Jimmy Downey makes a return for the Phoenix.

VUKOVIC READY FOR MARINERS CHALLENGE

Perth Glory goalkeeper, Danny Vukovic, has stressed that Friday night's game against the Central Coast Mariners at nib Stadium is a 'huge' game for the club.

The Mariners are currently first on the Hyundai A-League table entering a festive week of games.

"It's a huge game for us," Vukovic said.

"We haven't been playing the best football of late and not getting the results so Friday night is a very important game for us to get our season back on track."

It will be take-two on Friday as Perth Glory have already played Graham Arnold's men once this season, back in Round 4. On that day, the Mariners won 2-1, however, Vukovic says the Glory can learn from the defeat.

"I think so, I feel that we could have got a lot more out of it, especially after we were 1-0 up."

"We'll be looking back what we did there in that first half an hour, as we played them off the park, so if we can do the same on Friday night, we'll have a good shot."

Vukovic, a former Mariner himself, believes Arnold has made the Mariners tough to beat. So much so, Vukovic hasn't tasted success against his old club since he left to Turkey in 2010. "I've played them two or three times since I've left, and every time they've managed to beat the side that I'm in by one goal."

"They've got a great coach, they're well drilled and every player knows their roles in that team."

"Arnold gets the best out of them. "Hopefully it's a bit different on Friday night," he added.

And after a week of headlines surrounding the ownership of Perth Glory, the star keeper says it hasn't affected the players at all, reinforcing that their focus has been purely on football and getting a win against the Mariners.

"It's been business as usual. We got in on Monday and started work for the game."

"It's a very important game for us and we know that our Chairman has our backing, so we're just concentrating on the game and getting three points."

Kick-off is 7pm

DOWNEY MAKES SURPRISE RETURN

Jimmy Downey will make a surprise return on the Wellington Phoenix bench against Newcastle Jets at Westpac Stadium on Friday night.

Injured in training just days after making his debut as a substitute in the opening Hyundai A-league game against Gold Coast United, Downey was thought to be another week away from full fitness but today was given the all clear to start playing.

"I'll have to remember to take my bag to the stadium," the 24-year-old former North Queensland Fury fullback joked.

Downey admitted to being surprised when Phoenix head coach Ricki Herbert told him today he would be involved.

"I thought he would want to see me get through a full week's training before putting me in," Downey said.

"I did train all last week but with the team being away in Dunedin and Melbourne Ricki didn't see me."

Downey said the injury came at an inopportune time and he was glad to finally be up and running again.

"The pre-season had gone really well

and my body felt good and healthy," Downey said,

"Then in training after the Gold Coast game I was just running with Lochy (Tony Lochhead) and my heel got jammed in the ground."

"It seemed pretty innocuous and the doctors said I should just carry on."

"When after four weeks there was no improvement I had a scan and was told I needed a knee operation."

"It has been pretty frustrating, especially having to do a lot of work on my own when the lads have been away, but I'm feeling really good again and am quietly confident the injury is behind me."

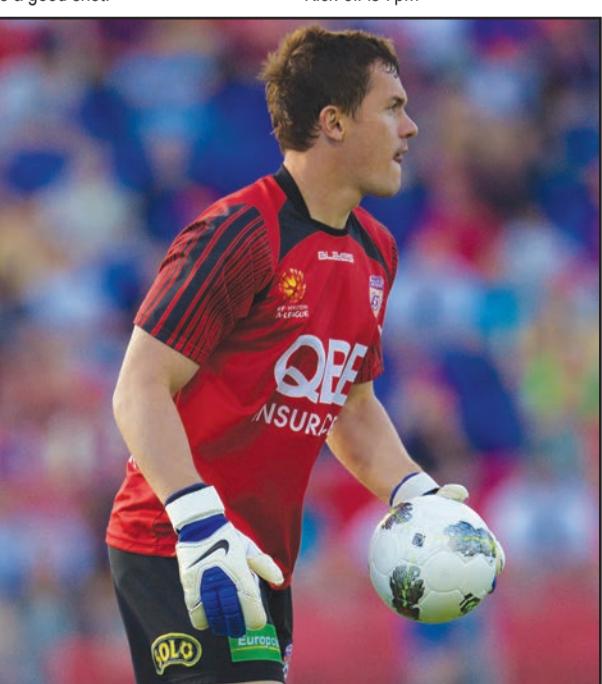
"I would like to get 20 or 30 minutes this week if possible, but I am just glad to be back in the mix."

Herbert is delighted to have Downey available again with Lochhead and Paul Ifill both still out with groin injuries and Nicky Ward sidelined this week after being concussed after a clash of heads in last Sunday's loss to Melbourne Victory.

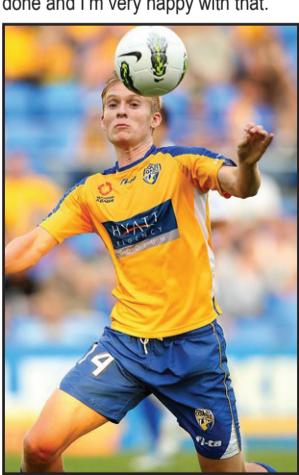
Please Note...

**GOAL! WEEKLY WILL STILL BE AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS NEXT WEEK.
Friday 30th December 2011**

goal!
Weekly



Perth Glory keeper Danny Vukovic gloves up for a clash against former teammates this weekend.



One of Gold Coast's shining lights, Ben Halloran.



V-LEAGUE NIKE PREMIERSHIP

Round Eight

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Final countdown before New Year begins

By Jimmy Soufis

FC Richmond 5-6 FC Essendon

It was the final round of 2011 and it kicked off with a bang, bottom of the table Richmond took on a slumping Essendon.

Essendon had their marquee signing Singapore International Aleksander Duric in their squad. Richmond started the game confidently and defended as a team playing on the counter attack managed to grab a goal early through Mohammed Algorabi.

Aleksander Duric was closely watched in the first half as Richmond closed down his space & Avenue to goal. Richmond were playing possibly some of their best Futsal of the season attacking & defending in numbers and jumping out to a 4-1 half time lead thank to goals from Taylan Aksoy and Giuseppe Amonail.

While Essendon's only scorer was Vlado Zorich. Richmond came out on the front foot in the second half and missed 2 open goals within minutes of each other & they were made to pay by Essendon as they banged in 4 quick goals inspired by Aleksander Duric and looked like running over the top, but Taylan Aksoy scored immediately after the restart and it was left to Essendon's Brazilian Maestro Diego Assaeda to clinch the tie for Essendon and have them sitting pretty in the top 4 going into the Christmas Break.

CF Brunswick 3-6 FC Prahran

On paper this looked like the clash of the night although Brunswick have been struggling for form this season they came the stronger side and grabbed the opening goal thanks to some quick work from Ruz Roslan.

Prahran had started the game a little sluggish and their stars were struggling to make an impact. Both sides were strong defensively early on. Jose Portillo was causing the Prahran defence all sorts of problems. Brunswick won a foul 2 Metres outside the D and a set play from Brunswick had Antonis Apostoakis on the score sheet.

Prahran's passes were constantly missing their targets as Brunswick took control. Brendan Chen looked inspired in goals as Jose Portillo blew an easy chance and was punished by a Camerons Holmes screamer.

A loose ball was then pounced on by Apostoakis who rounded the keeper for a rare double, which left Prahran keeper Michael Chami down with an injury Chami picked himself up whilst Barbosa and Tran blow an easy chance at goal. Jose Portillo was forced off with an injury shortly after as Clint Mogaoi Scored from a corner ball.

Seconds later Clint was on the score sheet again levelling the scores at 3-3, Prahran were inspired and were going for broke as Resit Culculoglu scored an amazing solo goal to put Prahran ahead 4-3. It was Clint Mogaoi who sealed the victory with a sublime header after a Barbosa pin point pass and Maxi Avram put some polish on the game with a thunderbolt which left Prahran in 3rd place and Brunswick second bottom for the Christmas Break.



Essendon's Diego Assaeda has his shot cleared off the line by Richmond's Taylan Aksoy, who was also busy up front bagging 3.



Metro's new recruit Ryan Filipovic has been a welcome inclusion for the sky blues in the absence of fellow defender Tomo Grgic.



Brimbank's in-form striker, Adem Alicevic celebrates a late goal, much to Mark Saric's disappointment.

Ashburton FC 3-9 Metropolitan

Metropolitan were having their unluckiest seasons to date sitting in 10th place and in danger of falling deeper into the relegation battle while Ashburton were travelling along sitting in 6th place knowing a win could potentially take them into the top 4.

Metropolitan definitely started the game strong and had a goal within the opening minute of the game through Alja Redzepovic, Ashburton Equalised through Leonardo Correa just Minutes later.

It was a very open game in the first which saw Metropolitan head into the break 6-3 ahead. The second half began with a contender for cake of the season with an open goal miss by Jermaine Deng which was punished by a penalty taken by Jusuf Avdic Ash-

burton's Defence was going from bad to worse in this game as Metropolitan took Control and the Rezepovic brothers Dino & Alja were firing on all cylinders for the first time in a long time.

Alja finish with 5 goals Dino with 2 and Avdic with 2 they look to be getting back to their rampaging best while Ashburton were one sorry sight as Leonardo Correa was the only shining light with 3 goals on a night which saw them fall into 8th position going into the Christmas Break.

Metropolitan rise to 9th on equal points.

FC Balwyn 3-6 Brimbank FC

The final clash of 2011 saw 4th placed Balwyn take on 11th placed Brimbank. Balwyn had their 2 superstars playing Reardo Luka & Ivan Zilic while Brimbank had Adem

Alicevic & Arin Messinovic playing in this vital clash.

Ben Bodo cleared a Brimbank chance off the line while Zilic was putting pressure of Kuzucu's goal. Mark Saric then hit the upright early in the peace; Robby Zadwany opened the scoring for Balwyn as he continued to cause problems for Brimbank before Arin Messinovic hit the upright as well from inside his own half.

Mark Borchert blew a good opportunity to score but made up for it by sliding one past Frano Saric for the opener which made it 1-1 at half time. Immediately after half time Mark Saric had Balwyn back in front with a sublime volley overall an even start to the second half which saw Borchert beat one man and scored a stunning half volley to level the scores again.

Honours were even after that goal which saw Ivan Zilic uncharacteristically miss an open goal. A brilliant end to end game of Futsal which could have gone either way as Balwyn forced Kuzucu into a fantastic double save and Zilic hit the woodwork in the same play. Balwyn looked to be pushing harder for the win before Messinovic missed an open goal (which seemed to be the story of the night) Brimbank then forced Frano Saric into a brilliant save but Alicevic sunk the Balwyn hearts to put Brimbank 4-3 ahead Balwyn subbed their keeper proving to be the wrong move as Alja Karic scored a screamer from half way to make it 5-3 and it was Karic again who put one past Zadwany to finish Balwyn off and have them sitting in 10th spot going into the break while Balwyn drop into 5th

V-League Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Pascoe Vale FC	7	7	0	0	56	22	34	21
2 FC Prahran	8	6	0	2	51	28	23	18
3 North Melbourne FC	6	6	0	0	39	16	23	18
4 FC Essendon	8	4	0	4	45	47	-2	12
5 FC Balwyn	8	4	0	4	34	39	-5	12
6 Mickleham FC	7	3	1	3	41	36	5	10
7 Fitzroy FC	7	3	1	3	31	36	-5	10
8 Ashburton FC	8	3	1	4	36	46	-10	10
9 Metropolitan FC	8	2	1	5	49	51	-2	7
10 Brimbank FC	8	2	1	5	32	45	-13	7
11 CF Brunswick	7	2	0	5	31	47	-16	6
12 FC Richmond	8	0	1	7	30	62	-32	1

Round 8 RESULTS

Wed 21st Dec

- 6:30 FC Richmond v FC Essendon 5 - 6
- 7:15 CF Brunswick v FC Prahran 3 - 6
- 8:00 Metropolitan FC v Ashburton FC 9 - 3
- 9:30 FC Balwyn v Brimbank FC 3 - 6
- T.B.A Pascoe Vale FC v North Melbourne FC
- T.B.A Mickleham FC v Fitzroy FC

Round 9 CLASHES

Wed 18th Jan

- 6:30 Metropolitan FC v FC Balwyn
- 7:15 FC Richmond v Brimbank FC
- 8:00 Pascoe Vale FC v FC Prahran
- 8:45 North Melbourne FC v Fitzroy FC
- 9:30 Mickleham FC v Ashburton FC
- 10:15 CF Brunswick v FC Essendon

Top Goal Scorers

1. M. Avram FCP	18
2. J. Da Silva PVFC	17
3. A. Nabbut FCE	17
4. A. Redzepovic Metro FC	15

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Friday 23rd December 2011



ATLÉTICO JUNIOR WIN IN COLOMBIA, OLIMPIA IN PARAGUAY

Latin Wrap



Francis Fields

What a superb Christmas present it would be to win a championship a few days prior as the case on Thursday with Atlético Junior of Barranquilla in Colombia.

They sure know how to party as Atlético Junior goalkeeper Sebastián Viera pulled off a vital save in a shootout against Once Caldas to help his side win Colombia's Clausura championship.

Once Caldas won the second leg 2-1 at home, having lost the first 3-2 at the weekend, to leave the final tied at 4-4 on aggregate. There was no extra time played. Junior won the shootout 5-3 after Caldas midfielder John Pajoy and forward Guillermo Beltrán, who both scored during the 90 minutes, failed from the penalty spot in the shootout.

Viera saved Pajoy's kick while Beltrán hit the post.

Pajoy had put Caldas ahead in first half added time before Carlos Bacca, who netted two penalties in Junior's first leg victory, equalised in the 58th minute.

Beltrán headed the home side back in front in the 69th minute.

It was Junior's seventh league title and third since the introduction in 2002 of two championships per year. They won last year's Apertura.

Earlier last week in the first leg, Atlético Junior managed to climb from behind at home against Once Caldas in the first leg of the Colombia final in a 3-2 result at the Metropolitano stadium in Barranquilla. A double by Paraguayan Jorge Daniel Núñez scoring on 19 and 39 minutes put the visiting Manizales team ahead although the locals from Barranquilla got back and reacted quickly with two penalties by forward Carlos Bacca just before the break on 44 minutes and on 57 minutes leaving Vladimir Hernández with the winner on 53.

Núñez had put Once Caldas in the lead with a sensational free-kick to the delight of some salsa sounds from the typical and colourful Colombian broadcast.

The home crowd was certainly in a festive mood until Bacca got back with his brace from the spot kick after Núñez had extended Once Caldas' lead on 39 minutes with a beautiful piece of individual play that left him only to round goalkeeper Carlos Rodríguez.

Defender Mauricio Casierra on 44 minutes provoked a foul in the penalty box to make way for Carlos Bacca, the new leading goalscorer in the Colombian championship to score and get Junior back into the game.

His second penalty conversion on 53 minutes was the result of an awarded foul on Luis Carlos Ruiz that the referee pointed out to the spot kick. Bacca once again put his side up 3-2.

It got worse on 68 minutes when Alexander Mejía got his marching orders for an early shower as Once Caldas were reduced to ten.

Once Caldas however could have equalised on 84 minutes with another powerful shot by Paraguayan Jorge Núñez that struck the crossbar.



Olimpia celebrate after 11 years of title drought in Paraguay to lift the coveted championship under the guidance of Uruguayan coach Gerardo Pelusso.

THE BITTERNESS OF RELEGATION

The year has also brought some surprising but yet unsurprising re-legations. Most notably River Plate in Argentina however, another great in Colombia has dropped.

Police in Cali arrested 66 people earlier in the week after the relegation of América de Cali causing riots in Colombia's third largest city, local media reported.

The riots broke out both inside the stadium as in other parts of the city after América's 3-4 loss against second division team Patriotas de Tunja, who will be promoted to the first division of Colombia's Liga Postobón.

Twelve people were injured in the riots outside the Pascual Guerrero stadium in Cali.

América de Cali is officially Colombia's best-performing team ever, but will play in the country's second division after losing in the two-legged play-offs against Patriotas, a team from the small town of Tunja. Once a rich club owing to their connections with the Cali drugs cartel, América have fallen on bad times after being placed on the so-called Clinton List with their assets in the United States frozen and companies ordered not to do business with them.

On the pitch, their chances went begging in front of goal and their star forward Jairo Castillo despite scoring from a brilliant header also missed his penalty and the villain of the loss that sends the giant club to the second division of Colombian professional football.

HEINZE TO RETURN?

Speaking of second division, AS Roma defender Gabriel Heinze is assessing his chances of a return back to his homeland and add his name to the team roster at River Plate.

With River making news this week with the signing of French World Cup winner David Trézeguet, the side is looking to boost its attacking options as well as its backline.

The aim is clear at the Monumental stadium, to gain promotion back up again to Argentina's first division.

Heinze (pictured) awaits the possibility of a move to Núñez, where River Plate is based in Buenos Aires, depending on whether or not defender Jonathan Maidana leaves the club.

Talks with the defender's agent - his brother have made significant progress this week as Heinze seeks to leave Rome

citing a lack of playing time.

He left his native Argentina back in 1997 from Rosario with Newell's Old Boys where he moved to Real Valladolid in Spain with barely 8 games played in the top flight.

Heinze's transfer possibility means he is a priority at River Plate. The 31 year-old globetrotter is enthused with the news so far.

Coach Matías Almeyda wants to further boost their goalscorer Fernando Cavenaghi up front with the signing of Trézeguet while defenders Alexis Ferrero, Adalberto Román and former Colo-Colo stopper Agustín Alayes all leaving.

Youngsters Ramiro Funes Mori, Leandro González Pirez and Germán Pezzella have a promising future ahead of them however Almeyda is seeking an experienced defender for his backline.

Olé olé for Olimpia

On a better note, three times South American champions Olimpia captured their first Paraguayan league title in 11 years when they beat Rubio Ñu 2-1 on the final of the Clausura championship on Sunday.

Olimpia -'The King of Cups' as also known, won the league title for last time in 2000, it's 36th in history and their third Copa Libertadores in 2002.

With this 2011 title, the Paraguayan giants have qualified for South America's top club competition next year along with Nacional, winners of the Apertura or Opening championship title in the first half of the year.

The side coached by Uruguayan Gerardo Pelusso scored through Argentine Maximiliano Biancucchi - who happens to be Lionel Messi's cousin and Colombian Francisco Nájera to beat Rubio Ñu and finish three points ahead of arch-rivals Cerro Porteño, who were held 2-2 by Sol de América.

The mood at Olimpia was not all celebratory, however, after their controversial president Marcelo Recanate's recent public spat with the team's four Uruguayan players resulted in veteran midfielder Sergio Ortíz vowing to leave the club.

Nine first division club presidents have also called on the Paraguayan Football Association to expel or suspend Recanate for publicly ridiculing the game's ruling body.

Olimpia's win was dramatic on the final day as arch rival Cerro Porteño won its game in difficult circumstances.



Carlos Bacca in celebration after guiding Atlético Junior of Barranquilla to the Colombian championship title. Plenty of salsa dancing moves included too in the Caribbean-flavoured side.

The Paraguayan has been marred by incidents of violence among fans, the latest of which forced the suspension of Libertad's home match with Cerro Porteño two weeks ago after a linesman was injured by a firecracker thrown from the crowd.

Cerro were leading 1-0 at the time and the result remained the same after the remaining 45 minutes were played two days later.

Libertad, Paraguay's most successful club of the decade with seven league titles, finished third in the standings six points behind Olimpia.

successfully converted penalties from Juan Aurich.

In winning the title, Juan Aurich not only became champions for the first time in their 89-year history, but also the first team from the provinces to win the league title in 22 years, breaking Lima's stranglehold.

The battle in the Andes: Deportivo Quito once again

Deportivo Quito obtained the Ecuadorian championship after defeating Emelec 1-0 at the Olímpico Atahualpa stadium in Quito last Saturday. Their latest title triumph was the fifth in their history, after the ones they claimed in 1964, 1968, 2008 and 2009.

Having won the first leg of the final 1-0 with a goal from Fidel Martínez in Guayaquil, Deportivo Quito repeated the feat at home with a strike from Matías Alustiza two minutes from full-time for a comfortable 2-0 aggregate victory over the two legs.

Backed by the majority of the 35,000 fans in the stadium, Deportivo Quito dominated their opponents for great part of the match, but especially after Eduardo Morante was sent off in the 53rd minute for a second bookable offense.

They created several opportunities to break the deadlock, however, were continually kept out by Emelec goalkeeper Wilmer Zumba. Emelec knew that they had to score a goal at all costs to stay alive, and they had the perfect opportunity to do exactly this in the 76th minute, but substitute Walter Iza failed to beat Quito goalkeeper Marcelo Elizaga when he had the goal at his mercy.

The missed opportunity would come back to haunt them, as in the 88th minute Alustiza fired a right-footed thunderbolt into the back of the net from outside of the area to give Deportivo Quito the three points, and essentially the title.

With the title, Deportivo Quito will participate in Group 7 of the Copa Libertadores, along with Vélez Sarsfield, Defensor Sporting and Chivas de Guadalajara. Emelec will compete in Group 2, alongside Lanús from Argentina and two yet to be identified sides.

Meanwhile, Ecuador's final Copa Libertadores berth will be decided on Monday, with the decisive playoff between Liga de Quito and El Nacional. El Nacional won the first leg of the playoff 2-1.

COPA SUDAMERICANA REVIEW

The accolades for Universidad de Chile came from all corners of the globe. Different international newspapers have highlighted the way the side won the Copa Sudamericana undefeated and the elegance of the players under the command of coach Jorge Sampaoli.

In Argentina, Olé newspaper wrote "the prowess of a giant that has been born deserves to be looked upon right from the very start. They thumped Flamengo in Rio de Janeiro, beat Nacional in Montevideo and also Vasco de Gama in Brasil, they managed to turn a result around Liga in the first leg final in Quito... They are crowned as worthy champions in front of their people in Santiago, with a seal of approval for the football that was played by a side throughout the tournament that was distinguished".

Popular website Canchallena.com pointed out how "U de Chile is in brilliant form and perhaps, in football terms, they were the deserved candidate to take out the Copa Sudamericana".

In Spain, Marca newspaper published how "The Chilean university side today is by far the best in-form team in South America and they gave Liga de Quito no chance at all".

Like many other media sources, the performance of Eduardo Vargas was a key note.

NEWS FLASH

The Colombian FA are keen to name a new replacement as coach of the national team for the recently sacked Lino Álvarez before the end of the year.

According to Argentine newspaper La Nación, former Paraguay coach Gerardo 'Tata' Martínez met with Colombian football officials in Buenos Aires on Tuesday.

Diego Umaña, coach of recently crowned Peruvian champions Juan Aurich wants a new attacking midfielder ahead of the club's 2012 Copa Libertadores debut which they share group with holders Santos.

Umaña has confirmed he will stay in charge of the Peruvian club for a further year.

Boca Juniors have confirmed coach Julio César Falcioni will stay for another year as the Argentina champions tackle the Copa Libertadores. They are also in the hunt for Chilean international goalscorer Humberto "Chupete" Suazo from Mexico's Monterrey.

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Jackson gets plenty of action at Celtic

By Con Stamocostas

1) Can you give us a brief synopsis of your time in the Scotland? Like opportunities you have had with Celtic playing wise or experiences that you have had living in Scotland that changed you?

I have been fortunate to play in many European tournaments, in many countries, against many of the world's biggest teams. I've been lucky enough to play against teams such as Borussia Dortmund, Boca Juniors, Liverpool, Aston Villa, Sunderland, Wolfsburg, FC Basel, Real Mallorca, Ajax and Tottenham Hotspur.

I was also involved in the Scottish Youth Cup Final in May. A Celtic Rangers old firm attracted a crowd of ten thousand at Hampden, Scotland's National Stadium. We won 2-1 after extra time, an amazing experience. The most exciting opportunity I've had is to be a part of the NextGen Series, a youth Champions League style tournament including the best of the best of Europe's elite. Our group consists of Marseille, Manchester City and world champions Barcelona. If we manage to qualify through our group we will be joining the winners of the other groups in Abu Dhabi in January for the finals.

2) You are a former Endeavour United and Knox City junior and had a short spell with Richmond's youth team. You also played for Southern Blue Tongues in the Victorian Champions League summer competition what was it like playing youth football for those teams?

My times at Knox and Endeavour were really great for me and the stage of my development I was at. I was at Knox City from the ages of 10-13 and Endeavour at 14 and 15 and the most important thing for me at that point was that I was enjoying myself

and that I had a good group of boys in my team as well as trying to learn about the game. A big step for me was playing in the summer league with Southern. Was lucky enough to be captain of the under 18s at the age of 15 and we managed to make it to the final. My time at all of these teams was greatly beneficial to me. Richmond was not a great time for me, I was 15 trying to get a spot in the under 21s which was a difficult task and I found myself on the bench and sometimes not even in the squad for most games. At such an important age it's not about what league you play in, it's just important to be playing regularly. So just before my 16th birthday I made the switch down a division to Frankston.

3) I read that 2009 was the big year for you. You joined Frankston Pines in Victoria's State League Division One. You were coached by Tommy O'Halloran and after just one game in the reserves against Northcote you were promoted to the first team and then won the club's best and fairest award and the players' player-of-the-year trophy What was that year like?

My year at the Pines was the biggest step I made in football. Tommy signed me and gave me my first game in the first team just a week after joining the club. A full season of playing against men, many of which had played at the highest level in Australian football, was a massive step for me and I was fortunate enough to gain the rewards at the end of the season.

4) You must give credit to your coach Tommy O'Halloran for shifting you from midfield to right back after your great year with Frankston Pines you got a trial with Melbourne Victory and after one game you were off to a trial with



Celtic can you give us an insight into that process? What was it like trialling with Celtic and what was the pressure like?

It's a very tough game playing in the middle of the park at that level so to ease me in at full back was a great

idea from Tommy. The Melbourne Victory coaches came to watch one of our games against Bentleigh Greens and I was lucky enough to get a phone call later that week inviting me to come and train with the youth team. Unfortunately due to some FFA rules involving age restriction and players that haven't been developed in state academies like the VIS, I was only able to make one appearance. It was actually my Frankston coach Tommy who organised my trial at Celtic. I was there for 10 days in December 2009 where I did 4 or 5 training sessions and played in 2 friendly games, after which I was fortunate enough to get offered my first contract. The pressure was actually not something that worried me, because I was just one of many trialists all I could do was try and show something a bit different. I wasn't expecting any miracles, just wanted to take the opportunity to train with some of the best players and coaches in Europe.

5) What is it like living in Scotland and how do you quell the homesickness?

I really like it here in Scotland, I have been living for quite a while now so I am used to this way of life. It isn't as different from Australia as some people might think, at least they drive on the same side of the road! Homesickness was very hard to begin with, especially after only a month of football I found myself with an ankle injury that had me on the sidelines for nearly 4 months. I'm lucky enough to be able to have my parents over here for a 2 or 3 months a year and I get to come back to Melbourne for Christmas so that is always good.

6) How did you get used to the professional environment in Scotland and what were the differences to level you faced in Australia?

The difference in the standard of football was probably one of the toughest changes I faced when I made the move. The tempo of the training and games was something it took me

months to get used to. Considering the majority of players at the club are full internationals for their respective countries, you can imagine how the first few weeks were for a kid from state league one in Melbourne trying to keep up!

7) What do you hope to achieve in your football career? Can you give us your short term and long term goals.

I've been very lucky to achieve many of my short term goals for this season already, including securing a new contract and playing international football. By next season I'd like to either be in or around the Celtic first team or be out on loan playing first team football at another club in the UK or Europe. In the long term I'd like to continue being included in the international scene and try and establish myself at a high level club as a regular first team player.

8) There are a lot of young players like yourself that are going straight to Europe and bypassing the A-League. What advice do you have for young players who want to follow your path?

In my opinion the most important thing for young players in Australia that want to establish careers in Europe is to stay focused and committed, and don't believe that the only way you will obtain such an opportunity is through FFA based academies and select squads. I was never selected for any state teams and I was turned down by the VIS at a young age. Just keep trying to play regular football, and if you are committed and have the talent you will get your opportunity at some point.

9) How do you relax away from football?

Most of my time away from football is spent playing my guitars, watching movies, reading, going to the driving range or hanging out with the boys playing PlayStation!

10) What kind of person are you? Describe yourself in a few words?

I'd say I'm a pretty laid back and outgoing person, a bit shy at times as well. I'm a bit of an individual as well, the boys aren't massive fans of my clothes and my music!

11) What is a usual week for you at Celtic? Can you give us an insight into a week as a player for Celtic on and off the field?

A usual week consists of training in the morning and going to the gym in the afternoon on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, with our games on Saturdays and usually a pool recovery session on a Sunday. Wednesdays we go to college.

12) You can play right back and as a midfielder what position do you play at Celtic and what do you prefer to play?

I was always a centre midfielder from a very young age until my time at Frankston where I played most of my football at full back, right and left. After I returned from injury at Celtic I began to play a lot of football at centre half. I then made the switch to right midfield and eventually got my chance at centre midfield and I have managed to keep that spot since then. Although some injuries and suspensions this season has meant I've played a few games at centre half. Overall I see myself a midfielder and that is where I like playing my football the most.

13) How is it watching the first team train and what do you have to do to make it in the first team?

The first team has some terrific players, we have internationals for Scotland, Ireland, Sweden, Greece, Wales, Israel, South Korea and Honduras. I've been fortunate enough to train with the first team several times, and they have been some excellent experiences. The pace of the game and their passing and movement is truly another major step above even youth level.

14) Anyone of the Celtic players who have impressed you?

We have some extraordinary players in our youth team this season. Some players that have stood out for me since I have been here include Filip Twardzik, Marcus Fraser, Paul George and Callum McGregor. Filip has made several first team appearances in friendlies, is a full Czech International at u19 level and is one of the most technically gifted I have ever played with or against. Paul just recently made his full first team debut in the Scottish Cup, he is also a full international for Ireland at u19 level and is one of the most skilful players I have seen. Marcus and Callum both played with me in the u19 European championships for Scotland and are both truly gifted footballers. These are 4 names I would keep an eye out for!

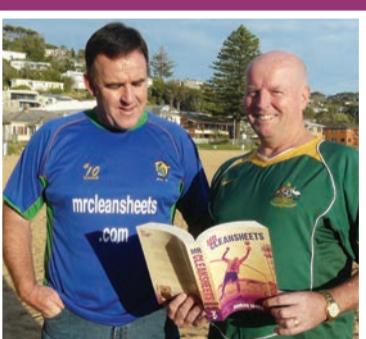
15) Has anyone at the Football Federation of Australia contacted you about playing in Youth Tournaments?

I have been contacted several times by the FFA asking me to play for the u18 and u19 national teams. It has been a complicated situation for me as before I was approached by Australia I was approached by Scotland, who I am eligible to play for through my Scottish father. I jumped at the chance to play international football and I travelled to Slovenia to play against Wales, Belgium and Slovenia in the European Championships. One day I would love to play for Australia and I hope they continue to invite me to be a part of their international set up as it is something I have always dreamed of doing.

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Christmas turns red and sky blue

EPL Wrap



Steven Talevski

It's the season to be jolly, but it's also the period in the season where Manchester United and their nearest title rivals, this season Manchester City, make or break their title chances.

Manchester United's two nil victory over Queens Park Rangers saw them top the Premier League table before a sole David Silva goal was enough for Manchester City to defeat Arsenal to take back top spot of the Premier League after the weekend fixtures.

With only a three day turn around, both sides produced convincing victories mid-week as Manchester City humbled Stoke City 3-0 while Manchester United smashed Fulham 5-0 leaving United two points behind top placed Manchester City.

With the two Manchester sides now eight points in front of the chasing pack, Friday mornings clash between Tottenham and Chelsea could cause either side a gap between them and the top which may be too great to be reached.

Tottenham, now in third place, lead into the game after a solid one nil victory over Sunderland meanwhile Chelsea go into the all-important clash at White Hart Lane after a shock one all draw away to Wigan at the DW Stadium. Liverpool continue to push for a European place as they earned four points over the weekend after they defeated Aston Villa which was followed up by a nil all draw against Wigan as Ali Al-Habsi saved a Charlie Adam penalty. Arsenal who are above Liverpool in fifth position on goal difference could only manage a 2-1 victory over Aston Villa after they were defeated by top of the table Manchester City one nil over the weekend.

European place contenders Newcastle



Two goals from Sergio Aguero help Manchester City to a comfortable 3-0 win over Stoke and ensure they will be top of the Premier League at Christmas for the first time since 1929.

United, who had a fantastic start to the season, continue to struggle with inconsistent form after a nil all draw at home against Swansea was followed up by a 3-2 loss against West Bromwich Albion. Down towards the bottom of the table, Blackburn has slumped to the bottom of the table after a 2-1 loss to Bolton who moved above them on 12 points while Wigan's two impressive draws against Chelsea and Liverpool were not enough to keep them out of the relegation zone.

EPL PREVIEW

The busy Christmas period in the English Premier League continues on Boxing Day with eight clashes, and two on the next day.

With teams playing multiple games a week, Manchester United Manager Sir Alex Ferguson has labelled the period very exhausting.

"It's always been that way but it's not as severe as normal," he stated. "One December had 10 games in it and there are not as many this year. It's the same for everyone and there's nothing you can do about it" He said.

"If you go back many years, it was remarkable, playing one day and then the next. I remember Burnley beating United 6-1 and, a couple of days later, United won 5-1 at Old Trafford! As stu-

pid as football was then, it was probably really exciting!"

Manchester United's next clash in the Premier League is against Wigan at Old Trafford where they will look to overtake Manchester City who faces West Bromwich Albion at The Hawthorns, with the two games being played simultaneously.

The opening Boxing Day fixture sees Chelsea face west London rivals Fulham at Stamford Bridge.

With only nine wins against their local rivals, and one in the last 32 years, Fulham look to defeat Chelsea for the first time since 2006 where a Luis Boa Morte goal separated the two sides in a one nil victory.

Bottom of the table Blackburn face the tough test of travelling to Anfield to face Liverpool who have not lost a game at home this Premier League season.

Under fire manager Steve Kean expects to remain Blackburn manager for the tie despite fans once again chanting "Kean Out" after their loss against Bolton.

"The fans come and expect us to get at Bolton and we didn't," Kean told the BBC.

"It's not nice to lose any game, irrespective of what the fans are singing. "Of course I will continue. We'll be

positive and climb the table. There is no board meeting due, I spoke to the owners before the game and I am sure we will all stick together."

Meanwhile Liverpool forward Luis Suarez has been banned for eight games by the FA after he allegedly racially abused Manchester United defender Patrice Evra.

The Uruguayan international was also fined 40 000 pounds after the month long investigation, and week-long disciplinary hearing.

Liverpool FC has said they are disappointed and very surprised at the outcome, while Luis Suarez shared his disappointments on twitter.

"Today is a very difficult and painful day for both me and my family. Thanks for all the support, I'll keep working!" tweeted the forward.

It is believed that Liverpool and Luis Suarez will fight the ban.

Meanwhile in other Boxing Day clashes, Arsenal host Wolverhampton Wolves, Aston Villa visit Stoke City, Sunderland host Everton while relegation threatened Bolton host Newcastle United.

There are also two fixtures on the day following Boxing Day, where Swansea City host Queens Park Rangers and Tottenham visit Norwich City.

UEFA UCL Draw

Holders FC Barcelona will continue the defence of their UEFA Champions League title against Bayer 04 Leverkusen after the draw for the round of 16 was held in Nyon, Switzerland.

The Spanish side – fresh from clinching the FIFA Club World Cup in Tokyo, where they defeated Santos FC 4-0 in Sunday's final – will travel to Germany for the first leg in February, with the return at the Camp Nou in March. Barcelona's domestic rivals Real Madrid CF, who won all six Group D games – only the fifth team to achieve a perfect record in the UEFA Champions League group stage – take on PFC CSKA Moskva.

Four-time winners FC Bayern München have been paired with FC Basel 1893, who eliminated last season's beaten finalists Manchester United FC in Group C. The teams met previously in the 2010/11 group stage, Bayern winning 2-1 in Switzerland and 3-0 in Munich. The 2010 champions FC Internazionale Milano face Ligue 1 side Olympique de Marseille, the winners in 1993.

The draw contained three debutants

at this stage in APOEL FC, SSC Napoli and FC Zenit St Petersburg, with the Cypriot titleholders pitted against Olympique Lyonnais in what was the first tie to be drawn. Chelsea FC are the opponents for Napoli while Zenit will tackle SL Benfica.

AC Milan, who claimed the last of their seven titles in 2007, have been paired with Arsenal FC – 2-0 winners on aggregate against the Italian side at this stage of the 2007/08 competition.

2011/12 UEFA Champions League round of 16 draw

Olympique Lyonnais (FRA) v APOEL FC (CYP)

SSC Napoli (ITA) v Chelsea FC (ENG)

AC Milan (ITA) v Arsenal FC (ENG)

FC Basel 1893 (SUI) v FC Bayern München (GER)

Bayer 04 Leverkusen (GER) v FC Barcelona (ESP, holders)

PFC CSKA Moskva (RUS) v Real Madrid CF (ESP)

FC Zenit St Petersburg (RUS) v SL Benfica (POR)

Olympique de Marseille (FRA) v FC Internazionale Milano (ITA)

UEFA Europa Draw

Manchester United FC and AFC Ajax will meet for the first time since 1976 while holders FC Porto await Manchester City FC in the round of 32 following the UEFA Europa League draw.

Holders FC Porto will take on Manchester City FC. While Porto and City have never played before, Ajax have not met the Red Devils since a 1976/77 UEFA Cup first-round tie, which United won 2-1 on aggregate. Old scores may also be settled when S.S. Lazio take on Club Atlético de Madrid, a side they eliminated in the 1997/98 UEFA Cup semi-finals. In other notable round of 32 ties Stoke City FC take on Valencia CF while Eredivisie leaders AZ Alkmaar will play Belgium's RSC Anderlecht.

Should Porto overcome City, they could

meet Liga rivals Sporting Clube de Portugal in the round of 16, with the Lions up against Legia Warszawa in their round of 32 fixture.

Round of 32 draw

1 FC Porto* (POR) v Manchester City FC* (ENG)*

2 AFC Ajax* (NED) v Manchester United FC* (ENG)

Spain finish 2011 on top of the world

Reigning European and world champions Spain have finished the calendar year on top of the FIFA world rankings.

Second-placed Netherlands and Germany in third were unable to close the gap to Vicente del Bosque's men in the last month of 2011.

There was very little movement in the top 50 following the lack of international games in recent weeks, and Bosnia and Herzegovina are the only new faces inside the top 20 as they climb three places to 20th position.

This year's Copa America champions Uruguay will head into 2012 in fourth spot ahead of England, Brazil, Portugal, Croatia, Italy and Argentina, who round up the top 10.

The top-ranked teams from each of the confederations are Spain (first), Uruguay (fourth), Côte d'Ivoire (16th), Japan (19th), Mexico (21st) and New Zealand (119th).

Wales - under the leadership of the late Gary Speed - claimed the title of Best Player of the Year as they finish 2011 in 48th position after collecting 300 points following impressive wins over Montenegro, Switzerland and Bulgaria in the Euro 2012 qualifiers.

Speed died last month at the age of 42.

Milan eye Torres loan

AC Milan is exploring the possibility of signing Chelsea striker Fernando Torres on a six-month loan according to La Gazzetta dello Sport.

FOOTBALL BRIEFS

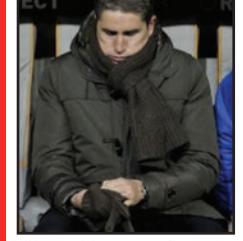
Garrido sacked from Villarreal post

Villarreal have confirmed on their website that manager Juan Carlos Garrido has been relieved of his duties.

The sacking comes after the club's elimination on Wednesday from the Copa del Rey at the hands of minnows Mirandes, with Villarreal also battling in 17th position in La Liga.

In a press release, the club thanked Garrido for his efforts, but did not reveal information on his potential replacement. Only goal difference separates Villarreal from La Liga's relegation zone, while the club also set a record for worst performance by a Spanish team in the Champions League after losing all six group-stage games.

Garrido had been appointed in February 2010, having previously had three stints with the club's B side.



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AZ abandon Ajax tie after fan invasion

Heerenveen thrashed Eerste Divisie outfit Oss 11-1 in the Dutch Cup on Wednesday, but Ajax's hosting of AZ Alkmaar stole the headlines.

The match between first and fourth on the Eredivisie table at Amsterdam ArenA had to be suspended after 38 minutes, with Ajax leading 1-0.

AZ coach Gertjan Verbeek ordered his players from the field after his goalkeeper Esteban Alvarado was sent off for kicking a supporter who had attacked him on the pitch.

Stewards intervened and took the Ajax supporter away but referee Bas Nijhuis showed the AZ shot-stopper a straight red card for misconduct, much to the dismay of Verbeek.

Verbeek entered the pitch and ordered his players to head for the dressing rooms.

Representatives of both sides and match officials decided to cancel the game, and it is unclear what the consequences will be for AZ.

Elsewhere on Wednesday, Heerenveen put Oss to sword at the Abe Lenstra Stadion, banging in 11 goals to crush the second-tier side.

Rajiv van la Parra, Filip Djuricic, Bas Dost and Luciano Narsingh all scored doubles for Heerenveen, while Sven Kums, Daryl Janmaat and Jeffrey Gouweleeuw added single strikes.

Christopher Bieber provided the only joy for Oss, who had defender Dennis Janssen sent off just before the half-hour mark.

NEC claimed a 3-0 win over Top-klassie outfit Achilles '29, with Krisztian Vadocz, John Goosens and Melvin Platje scoring the goals.

Neymar welcome at Barca, says Messi

Lionel Messi says Santos striker Neymar would be a most welcome addition to Barcelona's already-stellar forward line.

The Catalans have reportedly agreed a deal with Santos for the young prodigy and after lining up against the Brazilian in Sunday's Club World Cup final, Messi has revealed he would be more than happy to see the forward arrive at Camp Nou.

"If Neymar comes to Barcelona, he would be welcome," Messi told reporters upon returning to his native Argentina for the festive season.

Messi said he was in great spirits after Barca's stunning 4-0 demolition of Santos in Yokohama, a game in which he netted twice.

"I'm very happy," the 24-year-old said. "Having become world champion with my club makes me very happy. Now, to enjoy the holidays with the family."

Messi did admit that Argentina's disappointing Copa America campaign was his one big regret from the last year.

"Unfortunately, the national team have not yet given me (a title), but we are working with enthusiasm and hope," he said.

Messi has played 66 times for his country since making his debut in 2005, scoring 19 goals.

Chelsea's Terry to face court

Chelsea captain John Terry is facing charges over the alleged racist abuse of Queens Park Rangers defender Anton Ferdinand.

Terry allegedly made the remarks towards Ferdinand during Chelsea's 1-0 loss to QPR in their English Premier League clash at Loftus Road on October 23, and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) confirmed on Wednesday that the defender would face charges.

Alison Saunders, Chief Crown Prosecutor for London, said: "I have today advised the Metropolitan Police Service that John Terry should be prosecuted for a racially aggravated public order offence following comments allegedly made during a Premier League football match between Queens Park Rangers and Chelsea on 23 October 2011."

"The decision was taken in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors and after careful consideration of all the evidence I am satisfied there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and it is in the public interest to prosecute this case."

"Mr Terry will appear before West London Magistrates' Court on 1 February 2012."

The decision comes a day after Liverpool forward Luis Suarez was handed an eight-game ban and 40,000 pound fine by the Football Association (FA) for racially abusing Manchester United defender Patrice Evra.

Sneijder closes in on return to action

Wesley Sneijder has moved to reassure Inter fans by declaring that he will be fit to return to action next month.

The Dutch playmaker has been out of action since sustaining a muscular problem while warming up for the Serie A clash with Cagliari on November 11.

Sneijder had been expected to return to action earlier this month, but he remains on the sidelines and will play no part in Wednesday's meeting with Lecce, Inter's final outing before the winter break.

But despite mounting concerns about the severity of the injury, Sneijder insists that he will soon be back in action.

"Today you will play the last game of 2011 and I unfortunately will not be there," Sneijder wrote on his Twitter page. "But certainly I will return to play in January!"

Sneijder has made 57 appearances for Inter since joining from Real Madrid in 2009, helping the club win the treble in the 2009-10 season.

However, he has been heavily linked with a move away from San Siro in recent months, with Manchester United said to be interested in signing him away from Inter.

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Speed died last month at the age of 42.

Hiddink agreement with Anzhi

Guus Hiddink has reached a verbal agreement with Russian side Anzhi Makhachkala to coach the team until the end of the seas



Milan leads going into winter break



Luca Cetta

Following a busy week of Serie A action, including the completion of the postponed first round, Milan leads a closely fought championship. Roma continue to prove critics wrong, while Devis Mangia became the latest coaching casualty.

Elsewhere, arrests were made in conjunction with the June betting scandal.

Roma was said to be in crisis mode just before their match against Juventus, with owner Thomas Di Benedetto set to depart and Luis Enrique about to be fired. A battling 1-1 draw with the Bianconeri was bettered by a 3-1 away win at the Stadio San Paolo against Napoli.

The Giallorossi were aided by three strokes of fortune, but proved their mettle with the victory. For all the talk surrounding their Barcelona-type football, this win was achieved with less than 50% possession.

Erik Lamela got the ball rolling with the aid of an awful mistake from Napoli goalkeeper Morgan De Sanctis. Lamela's cross took a slight nick off Salvatore Aronica, but De Sanctis fumbled it over the line.

Marek Hamsik inconceivably missed an open goal from two metres out and Pablo Osvaldo tapped home the second. Hamsik gave Napoli hope with ten minutes remaining; however Fabio Simplicio beat De Sanctis with the aid of a wicked deflection. Napoli has now won just one of their past seven matches, while Ezequiel Lavezzi confirmed on Monday he will be out for a month due to injury.

Catania claimed honours in the Sicilian derby, stretching Palermo's goalless streak away from home to eight matches. A free-kick from Francesco Lodi set the tone and Catania sealed victory thanks to Maxi Lopez. The Argentine has been linked

with a January switch and the tears down his face after scoring and embrace of the fans when substituted seemed to agree with that.

Palermo President Maurizio Zamparini was on hand to take control of the situation, sacking Coach Devis Mangia, because "He lost the pulse of the situation with a team that did not follow him anymore... The team has had psychological setbacks and where other teams grew, we did not. Currently, we have no soul." Bortolo Mutti, Palermo boss during 2001/02, is now their third tactician of the season.

Lazio and Udinese played out an entertaining 2-2 draw in Rome. The visitors took the lead, but Senad Lulic and Miroslav Klose goals put Lazio ahead. Giampaolo Pinzi netted against his former club to ensure a share of the spoils and keep Udinese ahead of the capital club.

Juventus and Milan won by two goal margins at home. Juve conquered regional rivals Novara with goals from Simone Pepe and Fabio Quagliarella, his first goal in 364 days and a signal he is back after the knee injury suffered in January.

Milan had briefly leapfrogged Juve on Saturday by defeating Siena, with Antonio Nocerino on target for the sixth time this season. Another controversial episode ensued as Kevin-Prince Boateng went down easily to win a penalty, which Zlatan Ibrahimovic converted to seal the points.

Elsewhere, Inter grabbed their fifth win in six matches with a 1-0 win at Cesena and Genoa defeated Bologna thanks to a late goal. A crazy final ten minutes saw Fiorentina vs. Atalanta go from 1-0 to 2-2; Stevan Jovetic rescuing a point for the hosts. Chievo were comfortable against Cagliari and Parma incredibly drew 3-3 versus Lecce, despite being two goals down with just five minutes remaining.

17 arrests were made in conjunction with the June betting scandal which saw Atalanta captain Cristiano Doni suspended for three years and the club deducted six points. The betting ring had links with criminal organisations in Singapore looking to fix matches.

A number of Serie B matches from the



Milan and Juve tussle at the top of Serie A with AC doing the DC for Christmas honours

past two seasons are said to be under investigation, including three Atalanta matches last season. A further three Serie A matches from 2010/11 are also said to be suspicious: Brescia 2-0 Bari, Brescia 2-2 Lecce and Napoli 4-0 Sampdoria.

The postponed fixtures from the early season Serie A player strike closed out the year. There were goals aplenty as Napoli and Inter ran riot, while Novara and Catania rescued a point from two goals down.

Inter must have been wondering what was happening at half-time versus Lecce. Drawing 1-1 at the break, Inter had incredibly struck the woodwork four times in the first half, but eased to a comfortable 4-1 win. Giampaolo Pazzini and Diego Milito were amongst the goals, ending recent struggles.

Roma scored two goals before the break away at Bologna, while city rivals Lazio could only manage a 0-0 draw at home to Chievo, a result that ensures they are clear in fourth heading into the winter break.

Novara played the entire second half against Palermo with a man advantage, but was still two goals down midway through the second half. Palermo finally netted their first away goal of the season, which incidentally was an own goal. However, the hosts recovered in the final thirteen minutes to grab a share of the spoils.

Parma drew 3-3 at home versus Catania. Unlike Sunday, Parma was 3-1 up and cruising, before the visitors stormed back in the final twenty minutes. Finally, Atalanta thumped Cesena 4-1 as Siena and Fiorentina played out a 0-0 Tuscan derby draw.

A Lavezzi-less Napoli tore apart hapless

Genoa, winning 6-1. Clearly Genoa was in a festive mood and gifted the hosts three goals in the first half with poor defending. Edinson Cavani netted a brace in the rout.

In another massive upset, Villarreal lost 2-0 to Mirandes at El Madrigal, handing the Segunda B club a 3-1 aggregate triumph.

Mirandes squandered the opportunity to open the scoring when they were awarded a penalty, only for Ramon Borrell to see his penalty well saved by Cesar.

Villarreal were continuously pushed back as Cesar pulled out a great stop to again keep out Borrel, before Martinez Alain fired over in a glaring miss. Villarreal continued to be pushed back by Mirandes, who deservedly took the lead on the hour mark when substitute Pablo Infante scored.

He netted his second of the night in the 88th minute to seal Mirandes' spot in the last 16, while Mateo Musacchio's late sending off ensured a miserable night for Villarreal.

The drama did not stop there for Villarreal, who wasted little time in parting ways with manager Juan Carlos Gardido after the match.

Malaga were made to work hard by a valiant Getafe side, but managed to draw 2-2 in the second leg to go



Pepe Lopez

New lows for Atletico, Villarreal

Atletico suffered a 1-0 defeat at home to Albacete, with the La Liga outfit unable to ease the pressure on embattled coach Gregorio Manzano.

Victor Curto's goal just 20 seconds into the match was enough to secure a 3-1 aggregate win for the minnows.

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Malaga were made to work hard by a valiant Getafe side, but managed to draw 2-2 in the second leg to go

through with a 3-2 aggregate win. Athletic Bilbao are through after winning 1-0 against Real Oviedo at San Mames thanks to Ander Herrera's second-half strike, in a repeat of the first-leg score.

In a seven-goal thriller, Racing Santander advanced into the last 16 at the expense of Rayo Vallecano by virtue of the away goal ruling.

Rayo defeated Racing 4-3 on Wednesday, meaning the sides drew 6-6 over the two legs.

Despite winning 2-1 at home on the night, Real Betis exited at the hands of Cordoba, who won the first leg 1-0.

Levante completed a remarkable recovery against Deportivo La Coruna, who had won the first leg 3-1.

Levante reversed that scoreline to force extra time before securing their spot in the last 16 with a goal from Arouna Kone.

Granada defeated Real Sociedad 2-1 on Wednesday but were still eliminated 5-3 on aggregate, while Osasuna's 1-1 draw with Almeria saw them claim a 4-2 aggregate triumph.

Real Zaragoza, however, fell short against Alcorcon, whose 2-0 victory in the second leg helped them move into the last 16 with a 3-1 aggregate triumph.



Gregorio Manzano feels the heat after his side crashed out of the Copa del Ray.

Balkan Wrap



Alex Milic

Serbia

With the season at the half way point and the league on a Winter break, the clubs have now turned their focus on the upcoming transfer window with Red Star, Partizan and Vojvodina looking to boost their squads.

Like always the two biggest rivals Red Star and Partizan will be at war for the signatures of homegrown players. Red Star is in dire need of a few new players which will help the club in the second half of the season.

Robert Prosinecki put the whole squad on the transfer list having not been pleased with what he saw in the first half of the season in which Red Star have a deficit on 10 points to their arch rivals Partizan. The 'Black and Whites' will also look to strengthen their squad with likely departures of key players more than likely to

occur. Rumors suggest star striker Zvonimir Vukic is close to signing for Ukrainian club Dnipro.

Red Star winger Darko Lazovic has been voted the Best Young Player of the Serbian League while Partizan's wonderkid Lazar Markovic has been awarded with the Best Debutant in the Serbian SuperLiga.

Former National Team player and Partizan star Milinko Pantic has been linked with the top job of Primer Liga side Atletico Madrid a club he won the double with as a player. Radomir Antic who was the Manager the last time Atletico won the Spanish League has also been mentioned.

Croatia

With the fight against corruption in Croatian football taking centre stage, there has been a war of words between Hajduk and Dinamo Zagreb's Presidents.

Zdravko Mamic the controversial Dinamo President who has over the years been criticised for his handling of football matters despite the fact he sold dozens of players for numerous amounts of money, large sums that most clubs from the Balkans hardly ever receive for their star players.

He sold Corluka, Modric and Edu-



Galatasaray leads the pack in Turkey

ard to the English Premier League for record breaking deals in Croatian football but despite all he has done for Dinamo there is a lot of hatred towards him. Mamic is also a member of the Croatian Football Association and because of this also he has been linked to fixed matches in favor of his club Dinamo.

"We are proud of what we have done for Croatian football, Our Federation

is one of the best in Europe. Why are all these problems surrounding Croatian football? It's because the world is in crisis, The US are on the edge of bankruptcy, the EU is heading towards destruction, In 'Sisak' 1000 workers a day are left without a job but you would want us in football to have no problems?" A philosophical Mamic said.

Greece

AEK has slipped to third following a 1:0 loss to fourth placed Atromitos, the only goals came in the 56th minute through Sfakianakis.

Olympiakos continues its fine start to the season with another convincing win this time goals to Fuster and Djebbour gave the 'Red and Whites' three new points against Giannina. Olympiakos won midweek 3:1 in Greek Cup action in which Serbian striker Marko Pantelic continued his fine form with two goals.

Panathinaikos is four points behind the defending champions but have two matches in hand, the 'Greens' put three past Asteras in a 3:1 win with a double from Leto and one to defender Boumsong. In the next round Olympiakos is at home to Atromitos in the derby match of the round, Panathinaikos is way to Panaitolikos while AEK should have no trouble getting three points against bottom side Doxa.

In the Europa League Olympiakos takes on Russian side Rubin in the Round of 32 while PAOK will tackle Italian side Udinese who are currently in third position in the Serie A.

Turkey

Galatasaray are the sole leaders of the Turkish Super Lig following Round 17 as Fenerbahce played out a goal-less draw with Antalyaspor which gave Gala a great opportunity to seize their chance which they did thanks to a 64th minute Selcuk Inan strike against Mininaspor.

Socceroos hopeful James Troisi scored a double in Kayserispor's vital 3:0 win over bottom of the table Ankaragucu which now puts the Aussies club in sixth position. Besiktas was lucky to escape Samuspor with a point after Yildirim put the home side in the lead the 'Black and Whites' scored from the spot with 13 minutes remaining through Brazilian import Edu.

The biggest surprise so far has to be Eskisehirspor which is in third position. The new Manager of Orduspor if former Valencia and Inter Manager, Argentine Hector Cuper who will have a tough task in his first match in charge as the club welcomes Fenerbahce in the new year, Galatasaray takes on Istanbul while the derby match and battle for third place is between Besiktas and Eskisehirspor.



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Visit facebook.com/gomvfc or melbournevictory.com.au for more details.





ENGLAND EPL



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Manchester City	17	14	2	1	53	15	+38	44	WWLWD
2 Manchester United	17	13	3	1	42	14	+28	42	WWWWD
3 Tottenham Hotspur	15	11	1	3	31	18	+13	34	WLWWW
4 Chelsea	16	10	2	4	34	19	+15	32	DWWWL
5 Arsenal	17	10	2	5	33	25	+8	32	WLWWD
6 Liverpool	17	8	6	3	20	13	+7	30	DWWLD
7 Newcastle United	17	7	6	4	23	22	+1	27	LLLDL
8 Stoke City	17	7	3	7	18	28	-10	24	LWWWW
9 Norwich City	17	5	6	6	27	31	-4	21	DDWLW
10 West Bromwich ...	17	6	3	8	19	26	-7	21	WWLDL
11 Everton	16	6	2	8	17	19	-2	20	DWLW
12 Aston Villa	17	4	7	6	19	23	-4	19	LLWLD
13 Fulham	17	4	6	7	18	23	-5	18	LWLWD
14 Swansea City	17	4	6	7	16	21	-5	18	LDLWD
15 Sunderland	17	4	5	8	21	21	+0	17	WLWLL
16 Queens Park Ra...	17	4	4	9	17	31	-14	16	LLLDL
17 Wolverhampton ...	17	4	3	10	19	32	-13	15	DLLWL
18 Wigan Athletic	17	3	5	9	15	30	-15	14	DDWLW
19 Bolton Wanderers	17	4	0	13	22	39	-17	12	WLLLL
20 Blackburn Rovers	17	2	4	11	24	38	-14	10	LLLWL

SPAIN La Liga



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Real Madrid	16	13	1	2	56	15	+41	40	WLWWW
2 Barcelona	16	11	4	1	50	8	+42	37	WWWLW
3 Valencia	16	10	3	3	26	16	+10	33	WLWLW
4 Levante	16	9	2	5	25	19	+6	29	LWLWL
5 Osasuna	16	6	7	3	21	28	-7	25	DWWWD
6 Sevilla	16	6	6	4	18	17	+1	24	LWLWL
7 Málaga	16	7	3	6	20	22	-2	24	LDLWL
8 Espanyol	16	7	2	7	17	20	-3	23	WWLLD
9 Athletic Club	16	5	7	4	23	19	+4	22	WDDLW
10 Atlético Madrid	16	5	4	7	23	27	-4	19	LLWLW
11 Real Betis	16	6	1	9	17	22	-5	19	WWLLL
12 Getafe	16	5	4	7	17	23	-6	19	WLWLL
13 Granada	16	5	4	7	10	16	-6	19	WLWW
14 Mallorca	16	4	6	6	15	22	-7	18	LWDDW
15 Real Sociedad	16	4	5	7	16	23	-7	17	DWWWD
16 Rayo Vallecano	16	4	4	8	17	25	-8	16	LLLDL
17 Villarreal	16	3	6	7	13	23	-10	15	LDLWL
18 Sporting Gijón	16	4	3	9	16	27	-11	15	LWLLW
19 Racing Santander	16	2	8	6	11	21	-10	14	DDWLW
20 Real Zaragoza	16	2	4	10	13	31	-18	10	LLLLL

ITALY Serie A



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Milan	16	10	4	2	35	16	+19	34	WWWDW
2 Juventus	16	9	7	0	27	11	+16	34	DWDWD
3 Udinese	16	9	5	2	20	9	+11	32	DDWWW
4 Lazio	16	8	6	2	24	13	+11	30	DDWWL
5 Internazionale	16	8	2	6	22	19	+3	26	WWWWL
6 Napoli	16	6	6	4	29	18	+11	24	WLWDW
7 Roma	16	7	3	6	21	19	+2	24	WWDL
8 Catania	16	5	7	4	20	23	-3	22	DWDLW
9 Palermo	16	6	3	7	18	20	-2	21	DDLWL
10 Genoa	16	6	3	7	19	24	-5	21	LWLWL
11 Atalanta	16	6	8	2	23	19	+1	20	WDDDD
12 Chievo	16	5	5	6	13	18	-5	20	DLWL
13 Parma	16	5	4	7	21	26	-5	19	DDDDL
14 Fiorentina	16	4	6	6	15	15	+0	18	LDLWL
15 Cagliari	16	4	6	6	12	17	-5	18	LDLWD
16 Siena	16	3	6	7	14	16	-2	15	DLLL
17 Bologna	16	4	3	9	14	24	-10	15	LDLWD
18 Novara	16	2	6	8	17	29	-12	12	DLDLW
19 Cesena	16	3	3	10	8	20	-12	12	LWLLW
20 Lecce	16	2	3	11	17	33	-16	9	LDLL

One Game At A Time

France

Wednesday, 21 December 2011
 Auxerre v Dijon
 Espanyol Thonon Gaillard v Montpellier
 Lille v Nice
 Lorient v Caen
 Rennes v Bordeaux
 Sochaux v AC Ajaccio
 Toulouse v Brest
 Valenciennes v Lyon
 St Etienne v Paris SG

Germany

Friday, 20 January 2012
 Borussia M'gladbach v Bayern Munich
 Saturday, 21 January 2012
 Nuremberg v Hertha Berlin
 SC Freiburg v Augsburg
 Schalke 04 v VfB Stuttgart
 TSG Hoffenheim v Hannover 96
 Wolfsburg v Cologne
 FC Kaiserslautern v Werder Bremen
 Sunday, 22 January 2012
 Hamburg v Borussia Dortmund
 Bayer Leverkusen v Mainz

Italy

Saturday, 7 January 2012
 Siena v Lazio
 Inter Milan v Parma
 Sunday, 8 January 2012
 Udinese v Cesena
 Atalanta v AC Milan
 Bologna v Catania
 Cagliari v Genoa
 Lecce v Juventus
 Novara v Fiorentina
 Roma v Chievo
 Palermo v Napoli

England EPL

Saturday, 17 December 2011
 Blackburn v West Brom
 Everton v Norwich
 Fulham v Bolton
 Newcastle v Swansea
 Wolverhampton v Stoke
 Wigan v Chelsea
 Sunday, 18 December 2011
 QPR v Man Utd
 Aston Villa v Liverpool
 Tottenham v Sunderland
 Man City v Arsenal
 Tuesday, 20 December 2011
 Wolverhampton v Norwich
 Blackburn v Bolton

The Championship

Saturday, 17 December 2011
 Blackpool v Watford
 Brighton v Burnley
 Bristol City v Nott'm Forest
 Cardiff v Middlesbrough
 Doncaster v Leicester
 Hull v Millwall
 Ipswich v Derby
 Leeds v Reading
 Peterborough v Coventry
 West Ham v Barnsley
 Sunday, 18 December 2011
 Portsmouth v Southampton
 Monday, 19 December 2011
 Crystal Palace v Birmingham

Scotland

Saturday, 10 December 2011
 Hibernian v Rangers
 Aberdeen v St Mirren
 Celtic v Hearts
 Dunfermline v Kilmarnock
 Inverness CT v Dundee Utd
 St Johnstone v Motherwell
 Tuesday, 13 December 2011
 St Johnstone v Aberdeen

Greece

Wednesday, 28 December 2011
 OFI Crete v Levadiakos
 Aris Saloniaka v Doxa Dramas
 Tuesday, 3 January 2012
 Giannina v OFI Crete
 Panionios v Asteras Tripoli
 Wednesday, 4 January 2012
 Ergotelis v Fc Xanthi
 Kerkyra v Aris Saloniaka
 Panetolikos v Panathinaikos
 Olympiakos v Atromitos

Spain

Sunday, 8 January 2012
 Espanyol v Barcelona
 Getafe v Athletic Bilbao
 Levante v Mallorca
 Malaga v Atletico Madrid
 Racing Santander v Real Zaragoza
 Rayo Vallecano v Sevilla
 Real Betis v Sporting Gijon
 Real Madrid v Granada
 Real Sociedad v Osasuna
 Villarreal v Valencia

Holland

Friday, 20 January 2012
 ADO Den Haag v Roda JC
 Saturday, 21 January 2012
 De Graafschap v Heerenveen
 SC Excelsior Rotterdam v NAC
 FC Twente v RKC Waalwijk
 Sunday, 22 January 2012
 Vitesse v NEC
 AZ Alkmaar v Ajax
 FC Groningen v Heracles
 VVV Venlo v Feyenoord
 FC Utrecht v PSV Eindhoven

Portugal

Sunday, 8 Jan 2012
 Beira Mar v Braga
 Gil Vicente v Nacional
 Uniao Leiria v Benfica
 Guimaraes v Feirense
 Martimo v Olhanense
 Rio Ave v Pacos Ferreira

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Southampton	22	13	5	4	45	24	+21	44	DDLWL
2 West Ham United	22	13	4	5	37	20	+17	43	WLWWD
3 Middlesbrough	22	11	8	3	28	19	+9	41	WWLWD
4 Hull City	22	12	3	7	26	22	+4	39	WWWWL
5 Cardiff City	22	10	8	4	36	25	+11	38	LDWWD
6 Leeds United	22	10	5	7	36	30	+6	35	LDWLW
7 Reading	22	9	6	7					

That was the season that was 2011



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Futsal Oz

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AC Milan Academy

Football Development Australia

Bayswater Indoor

MFS

Soccer Fever

Kanga Cup



ZYGO Boots

Football West

ALANIC

FFA

A-League

The Readers



Thank you to all of our readers, sponsors, advertisers and contributors for your support in season 2011. We hope you enjoyed the read as much as we did. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Looking forward to kicking more goals together in 2012!